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OSRICK.

A ROMANCE.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.

OSRICK;

OR,

Modern Horrors.

A ROMANCE.

INTERSPERSED WITH A FEW

ANECDOTES, &c.

THAT HAVE THEIR FOUNDATION IN TRUTH, AND WHICH ARE OCCASIONALLY POINTED OUT TO THE READER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

RICHARD SICKELMORE,

AUTHOR OF

MARY-JANE; RAYMOND; AGNES AND LEONORA; EDGAR; RASHLEIGH ABBEY; &c. &c.

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OSRICK.

THE astonishment which Mr. Somerton had experienced in beholding the keys in their proper place, from which they had been absent but a very short time before, and the

JEALOUS FEARS

that had so suddenly been augmented in force by the communication of the servant, had put him rather off his guard, and induced him to send for his wife, to

have the circumstance that alarmed and perplexed him explained, in a manner, perhaps, rather more abrupt than the occasion could justify. This occurred to him the moment after the servant had quitted the hall; but so anxious was he to know by whom the keys had been restored to their usual place, that he made no effort to call the servant back.

The short commune, however, that he had with his own thoughts, ere he saw Mrs. Somerton, had, in a great measure, extinguished the blaze of anger that had surprised and inflamed his mind; for if Mrs. Somerton had returned the keys, as the servant suspected, she, of course, would not hesitate to make such an acknowledgment, when questioned on the subject, as should unravel the whole affair. Jealousy, however, still whispered him, that it was Belmont he had seen from the window; but what then? Mrs. Somerton had not been seen with him; yet

yet she had been absent nearly as long as Belmont; and the keys had been brought back by her.

It did not once strike him, that if Mrs. Somerton could be depraved enough to admit of licentious freedoms from Belmont, or from any other person, how little likelihood there was that she could possess the folly of carrying on such an illicit intercourse, at the almost certain risk of being discovered by the family—so ridiculously imbecile often are the premature conjectures of a jealousy-disordered brain, and so little has rationality to do with its general conclusions.

"I sent for you," said he, as Mrs. Somerton entered the hall, in as gentle a manner as he could command, "to know if it were you that, but just now, had the keys of the shrubbery, as they were missing when I had occasion to make use of them, and have since been returned by nobody knows who?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"The keys of the

shrubbery! no, my dear, I have not been in the shrubbery—have you found out who it was you observed there?"

Mr. Somerton.—"How were you aware that I had seen any one there?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"Alethea told me so."

Mr. Somerton.—"When?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"Not a moment before the servant told me that you would speak to me."

Mr. Somerton.—"And you know not who returned the keys?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"Not I, upon my honour."

Mr. Somerton.—"The knight swore by his honour that the pancakes were good."

Mrs. Somerton.—"What do you mean?"

Mr. Somerton.—"Honour—nothing!"

Mrs. Somerton.—"Indeed I comprehend you not."

Mr. Somerton.—"Thomas told me that

that you were in the hall when the keys were brought back."

Mrs. Somerton.—"He knows who brought them back then!"

Mr. Somerton.—"And so, of course, must you!"

Mrs. Somerton.—"Indeed I know nothing either as to their having been missing, or returned."

Mr. Somerton.—"Were you not here about ten minutes ago?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"I believe I was."

Mr. Somerton.—"Were the keys on the hook then?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"Indeed I know not; the necessity of examining whether they were there or not, never once struck me."

Mr. Somerton.—"Have you no idea of who it was in the shrubbery?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"Me! How should I?"

Mr. Somerton.—"Very true—very true."

His fears still getting the better of his reason, Mr. Somerton now paced the hall visibly agitated.

"Good God!" exclaimed Mrs. Somerton, "what is it that so distresses you?"

Mr. Somerton.—"Can you not guess?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"I wish I could; because then I might have it in my power to administer consolation."

Mr. Somerton.—"You!"

Mrs. Somerton.—"Yes, me."

Mr. Somerton.—"Impossible!"

Mrs. Somerton.—"I am sorry for it."

Mr. Somerton.—"What are you sorry for?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"I am sorry that you should conceive I have not the ability to console you in your distress."

Mr. Somerton.—It may be so!"

Mrs. Somerton.—It is so—pray tell me what is the matter."

Mr. Somerton.—"You are the matter!"

Mrs. Somerton started—the surprise of the

the moment caused a sudden blush to mantle her features, and the

EMBARRASSMENT

of innocence, for the instant, to fetter her tongue. "Good God!" she at length ejaculated, "what can you mean? How has aught that I have done operated to afflict you?"

A tear trembled in her eye as she approached him—but there was no trait of resentment in her countenance, though the momentary glow which surprise had caused there, had been succeeded by the paleness of the lily.

"Speak to me," she continued, "tell me how I have offended, that I may avoid inflicting similar pain in future?"

Mr. Somerton—"Cannot your own heart inform you? Have I, indeed, no reason to complain?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"None that is known to me!"

Mr. Somerton.—"You know not who was in the shrubbery while the keys were missing?"

With a dignified firmness, such as vice can never assume, she energetically replied—

"On my soul, I do not. If I had known, I would so have declared to your former question."

Mr. Somerton.—"Unless you had had weighty reasons for acting as you did."

Mrs. Somerton.—"Gracious powers! to what would your words allude? How am I to comprehend them?"

Mr. Somerton.—"Shall I speak more plainly?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"If you love me, do."

Mr. Somerton.—"If I love you!—Oh! woman, woman, deceit is in your wiles, and wretchedness is the portion of those who trust you!"

The tears that had before only moistened the eyes of Mrs. Somerton, now trickled, in quick succession, down her face—

"Believe

"Believe me," she ejaculated, "I never did, and never can deceive you—Of what would you accuse me?"

Mr. Somerton.—"Of nothing!"

Mrs. Somerton.—"Then why should such unkind words escape you?"

Mr. Somerton.—"Osrick leaves us to-morrow—let us not make him unhappy, the last evening, perhaps, he may ever pass with us; therefore return to your company, and divulge not what has now passed between us; but

> "Mock the time with fairest shew—
> Let the false heart conceal
> What the false heart doth know."

Mrs. Somerton.—"Have I deserved this treatment?"

"Leave me," he vehemently exclaimed, "or you'll drive me mad."

Mrs. Somerton retired. It was the first time that she had ever received a harsh word from her husband, and severely agonized was every fibre of her heart.

In the perturbed state of her mind, it was impossible for her to return to the company in the drawing-room, without being subject to such interrogatories as she was prohibited answering; for how could she account for her disordered appearance, without revealing what had been the cause of it? Of the conduct of Mr. Somerton, she could but think with astonishment and alarm; that jealousy had ruffled the even current of his temper with a stream of doubts respecting herself, his words had too unequivocally evinced, to be misunderstood; but, as there must be a second object, whose rectitude of behaviour must be suspected, who that second object was, her sagacity could not discover; and least of all, did her ideas rest on Belmont. Belmont, she knew, was regarded as the lover of Alethea, though some had supposed that he was not indifferent to Miss Stokes—he was also the intimate friend of the Lieutenant; and, for aught she knew to the con-

contrary, much respected by his father. These circumstances considered, therefore, there was no singularity in her not conceiving that Belmont had rendered himself an object of suspicion to her husband; and as she scarcely ever saw any other male acquaintance, and none but such as were introduced to her by Mr. Somerton, how was it possible that she should be enabled to draw any conclusions on the subject, that could appear at all feasible to herself? Conscious

INNOCENCE,

however, in the end, giving happiness to reflection, tranquillized her spirits.

"What stronger breast-plate than a heart untainted?"

To know that we are free from vice, and be unhappy long, is impossible.

"There is no courage but in innocence;
No constancy, but in an honest cause."

The courage of innocence now upheld Mrs. Somerton. Her alarms had softened, and resolved themselves into regrets; and she now felt her spirits equal to the task of once more joining the party in the drawing-room, with a tolerable degree of composure. "Time," reflected Mrs. Somerton, "cannot fail of restoring me to the good opinion of my husband, and of removing the prejudice he has so unaccountably imbibed."

In the words of Dryden, she might, with justice, have exclaimed—

"I thank the gods, no secret thoughts reproach me.
No; I dare challenge Heav'n to turn me outward,
And shake my soul quite empty in their sight."

Or in the language of Phillips—

"O! thou eternal Power, whose piercing eye
Discerns each secret guilt,—search thou my heart!
And as thou know'st me innocent, support me."

Be but the necessary time allowed for sober

sober investigation, and almost invariably, as Shakespeare beautifully expresses,

" Innocence shall make
False accusation blush, and Tyranny
Tremble at Patience."

.....

" Thrice is he arm'd, that has his quarrel just;
And he but naked, tho' lock'd up in steel,
Whose conscience with Injustice is corrupted."

.....

" Innocence
Conceal'd is the stol'n pleasure of the gods;
Which never ends in shame, as that of men
Doth oft-times do; but like the sun breaks forth,
When it hath gratified another world,
And to our unexpecting eyes appears
More glorious through its late obscurity."

.....

" On a soul secure
In native Innocence, or Grief, or Joy,
Should make no deeper prints than air retains;
Where fleet alike the vulture and the dove,
And leave no trace."

.....

Mr

Mr. Somerton, when left to himself, though agonized with doubts, still condemned the unfeeling impetuosity of his conduct—suspicion, however, whispered to him, "Did not the crimson current glow in her cheeks, when you but insinuated an accusation of dishonesty?" but whether called thither by innocence surprised—offended, or conscious guilt, 'twas difficult to determine. But as every thing appears yellow to the jaundiced eye, the latter made the deeper impression on his mind, and increased the tortures he endured.

Seizing the keys, he now proceeded for the shrubbery, paced hastily its various winding walks, but without making any new discovery, and then returned to the house.

It was now evident to him, that whoever it was that had previously returned the keys to the hook, must have been the very person he had seen from the window of the room above; and

was extended farther—the servants were severally and collectively interrogated—but all denied having any knowledge of that subject their master so anxiously wished to have elucidated.

Baffled in his design, and chagrined in consequence, Mr. Somerton, at length, attempted to compose his spirits. Again he blamed his precipitate conduct to his wife; and though he fully agreed with the bard, that

> "Undue suspicion is more abject baseness,
> Even than the guilt suspected,"

yet could he not cleanse his mind of the foul doubts that lurked there.

In a state of comparative tranquillity, he, however, at length returned to the drawing-room, and was not a little surprised to find that Belmont had returned thither before him.

"I have been taxing Belmont," said Alethea,

Alethea, as Mr. Somerton entered the room, "with being in the shrubbery just now, but he denies it—was not the person we saw, Mr. Somerton, very like him?"

"You thought so at the time, I remember," dryly answered Mr. Somerton, "though the distance was too obscured by twilight, for me so particularly to distinguish the object."

"Why what do you suppose," laughingly said Belmont to Alethea, "I could want in the shrubbery at that hour?"

"What you wanted there," archly replied Alethea, "is the very thing we wish to find out—now do have the candour to tell us."

Mr. Somerton fixed his eyes upon his wife—faint lineaments of regret were yet visible in her countenance, intermingled with those indescribable traits which conscious purity only can give, to render the features heavenly and interesting. "I must confess," she now mildly observed, "it

"it would give *me* pleasure to know who it was there; for I have not so little of my sex's weakness as to be entirely without curiosity."

"It can be of no consequence," remarked the Lieutenant, "who was there —therefore, had it been Belmont, what motive could have prompted him to conceal it?"

"None in the world," said he; when, turning his attention to Alethea, he continued—"Are you not ashamed of yourself, you little bewitching chatterbox, to bring me into such a dilemma?"

A laugh succeeded, and the conversation reverted to another channel.

If Mrs. Somerton had been rendered unhappy by what had occurred, she had sufficient command over her feelings, to prevent her uneasiness from becoming manifest to the company; and Mr. Somerton's mind appeared to have experienced considerable relief, in noticing the innocent placidity of his wife

wife—for reason told him, that it was impossible for conscious guilt to betray an unconcern so easy, and at the same time, so dignified, as that which it then gave him pleasure to notice.

THE DEPARTURE

of Osrick, the time for which was fast approaching, was again freely talked of; his regiment was at Southampton, and at Southampton he proposed being himself before the ensuing evening. Towards midnight the party separated—the Lieutenant having taken an affectionate leave of his visiting friends—nor did the tears which glistened in the bright eyes of Alethea, as she faltering articulated a last adieu, escape his notice.

By six o'clock on the following morning, a post-chaise was at the door of the Lodge. Early as it was, Mr. and Mrs. Somerton were taking breakfast with the Lieutenant; and before seven o'clock they saw

saw him depart, attended by his servant on horseback.

Mr. Somerton, though his regrets that his son had left him were visible, appeared, in a great measure, to have overcome those jealous fears that had tortured him on the preceding day. His conduct to his wife was again affectionate and tender—her pleasure at the alteration she perceived in him, was great and sincere—nor did she once remind him of his singular conduct towards her but the day before.

Ten days had elapsed from the Lieutenant's departure, and Belmont had visited the Lodge but once.

MENTAL SERENITY

Mr. Somerton again enjoyed—the defamatory remarks he had heard at the ball, and other unpleasant incidents, he had nearly forgotten—his all of happiness he once more rapturously contemplated in the

the virtuous and endearing society of his wife.

"We often see against some storm,
A silence in the Heav'ns, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
As hush'd as death."

How fleeting are the pleasures of this life!—to-day the spirits mount in extacy, and not a cloud the horizon of our prospects exhibits to curb our exultations; and yet ere the sun, which shone upon the bliss of the morning, hath sunk in silent sublimity in the west, jarring and unexpected events—

"The ridden thoughts, hagg'd with oppressive fears,
Have sunk the spirits to the depth of hell."

Mr. Somerton, the twelfth day after his son had left him, had been to pay a visit to Annette, at Mrs. Manderson's, and was pleased to find that her health was nearly reestablished. He had left her but a short time, when meeting with a friend

friend or two in the town, he was induced to take dinner with them; and a messenger was dispatched to the Lodge, to inform Mrs. Somerton, that probably it might be late in the evening before he returned.

Mr. Somerton, however, finding himself rather unwell towards the evening, withdrew much sooner than he had at first intended, and reached the Lodge about an hour after the close of the day.

The evening was pleasant—the wind was scarcely felt—the sky was clear, and the twinkling stars shone brightly. The irradiating influence of the moon, also, combined to hold, as it were, the gloom of night under subjection, and distinctly shew the various objects on the globe's surface, in the absence of the sun.

Mr. Somerton, on entering his residence, enquired of the servant who let him in, if his mistress was above, in the drawing-room? and was answered in the negative. She had been absent about half

half an hour, and the servant believed that she was taking an evening walk in the shrubbery.

Mr. Somerton, repressing his

ASTONISHMENT,

coolly bade the servant retire, and was presently in the shrubbery likewise. He had been there but a short time before he beheld, at a distance, Mrs. Somerton; and, to his inexpressible mortification and surprise, saw that Belmont was with her!

All his former fears were now revived—nay more, he felt that they were confirmed—there needed, he imagined, but such a proof of his wife's incontinence, to curse her in his estimation for ever.

Transfixed as it were to earth, he gazed, in agony indescribable, on the distant objects—he saw Belmont raise her hand to his lips, his wife nothing loath, for she made no effort to withdraw her hand from his licentious pressure. He saw her accompany

accompany him to the outer gate—again her hand was raised to Belmont's lips, and kisses imprinted on it—and her handkerchief waved an adieu as he departed. He beheld her lock the gate after him, and shape her course down the walk to where he was standing.

ANGER

heated his heart, and inflamed his visage, as the distance gradually lessened between them; and execrations seemed ready to issue from his lips—

> "With fiery eyes, and with contracted brows,
> He coin'd his face in the severest stamp,
> And fury shook his fabrick like an earthquake."

Their eyes at length met—Mrs. Somerton started—she appeared confused—but ere a word could be uttered by her, he vociferated—

"Vile wretch! thy perfidy is no longer hid from me: infamous woman! my former suspicions of thy baseness were

then but too correct. Well mayest thou tremble, viper—demon—oh! be perdition the reward of thy iniquity!"

"Heavenly powers protect me!" respired Mrs. Somerton, trembling universally at the agitated and almost convulsed state in which she beheld him.

Mr. Somerton.—"Wanton! hast thou deserved such protection?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"That righteous and Omnipotent being, who formed and governs the universe, will not desert the innocent in their affliction."

Mr. Somerton.—"Innocent! Impious, deceitful wretch, wouldst thou class thyself of the number of the innocent?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"I would; and in the holy assurance of purity, I doubt not but Heaven will recognise my claim."

Mr. Somerton.—"Thy name shall be blotted from Heaven's records for ever—art thou not an adulteress?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"No! no! or your words would kill me."

Mr.

Mr. Somerton.—"Did I not see the villain imprint kisses on thy hand, which, tempted to iniquity by the libidinous desires of thy heart, thou extended towards him? did I not behold him? Tortures rack the fiend eternally—and for thee——"

Mrs. Somerton.—"Oh! do not curse me—Indeed, indeed, you were deceived."

Mr. Somerton.—"Deceived! saw I not Belmont with thee?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"You did—you did—but——"

Mr. Somerton.—"Out of my sight, lest I forget that thou art a woman, and trample thee beneath my feet."

Mrs. Somerton.—"As you hope for mercy yourself hereafter, hear me now"—

Mr. Somerton.—"Wouldst thou deny thy guilt?"

Mrs. Somerton.—"Listen but to my words, and you shall find that I have done nought to merit your displeasure."—

As she uttered the last words, she endeavoured to take his hand—but, muttering curses, he cast her rudely from him with disgust, and hastily departed.

In a state but little short of actual madness, Mr. Somerton reached the Lodge—at one instant resolving to quit it for ever, and the next, to order the doors to be locked against his wife. His rage then turned towards Belmont, and he determined that another day should not close without his having inflicted a punishment on him suitable to his deserts. Osrick next occupied his thoughts—he now regretted

his son had been so suddenly compelled to take, more than ever—and in the fever of his mind, he endeavoured to draw up a letter for him, to apprize him of his distress.

The Lieutenant, little dreaming of what would happen to render his friends miserable

rable so soon after his departure, had commenced his journey, if not with a light heart, with that feel of self-approbation which a rigid attention to his duties only could give.

Travelling at a brisk pace, and losing but little time at the close of the respective stages, he had crossed the watery boundary of Sussex by mid-day, and entered Havant, where having taken a glass of wine and water and a biscuit, he again set forward, for Southampton.

The day, fortunately, happened to be exceedingly fine, and the Lieutenant, riding with the windows down, found ample food for amusement, in reviewing the surrounding country, and the more immediate objects as he passed them.

About three miles from Havant, he overtook a tall hearty man, who was travelling on the road, with a small bundle at the end of a stick, which he supported on his shoulder. As the chaise passed him, the Lieutenant obtained a full view of his

thought your uniform bespoke you of the army—an officer in the marine service, I suppose; and a birth on board-ship you would willingly look out for me, whether I had the inclination to accept it or not. I thought you were too civil by half."

"Your suspicions are groundless," said Osrick; "in that particular you have nothing to fear from me."

"May be not," remarked the other; "though I would sooner sup with Belzebub than trust you."

"Pray," said Osrick, paying no attention to his latter words, "have you any recollection of having seen me before?"

The man looked more intently at him. His manner suddenly appeared rather embarrassed:, "I think I have," he at length hesitatingly replied—"that is, it may have been that I have seen you before, or it may not."

The Lieutenant described when and where they had previously met, which increased

increased his embarrassment, but obtained no answer.

"There were some singular circumstances," observed Osrick, "that interested, and, I may say, alarmed me, in the cottage I allude to, and which I have an anxious desire should be explained. Now if you can give me the information I want, this purse of gold shall be your reward."

The man eyed the purse which Osrick exhibited to him with a wistful eye—then took a side glance at the postillion, as well as at the servant on horseback behind.

"You are going to Portsmouth, Sir?" he at length observed.

Osrick told him that he should continue at Portsmouth but a short time—his destination being Southampton.

"Where," enquired the other, "shall I find you at Southampton?"

The Lieutenant stated to what regiment

he belonged, and gave him a card with his name.

"I dare not comply with your request here," said the man; "but at Southampton, in a day or two at farthest, I'll entitle myself to some of the gold that you seem so willing to part with."

Osrick felt disappointed at the proposed delay—at first he felt an inclination, with the assistance of his servant, to have detained the man whether he would or not—the other, however, seemed to guess what his thoughts were, as he pointed to the low thick hedge to his right, indicating that he had the means of escaping in his power, to where no person on horseback could very easily follow him, and where those on foot, not quite so well acquainted with the grounds as himself, would stand but little chance of coming up with him.

The Lieutenant, therefore, as the likeliest method to avoid ultimate disappointment, agreed that the other should pay him

him a visit at Southampton—presenting him with a guinea, as an earnest of that reward which would attend the performance of his promise.

The man now darted off, outstripping the chaise; and turning, in the end, by a narrow zig-zag path, through a small opening in the hedge, disappeared.

Had the Lieutenant been inclined that his servant should have dogged him, for the purpose of discovering where he dwelt, it could scarcely have answered any purpose, as he must have performed the task on foot, or rather he would not have been enabled to perform it at all, from his total ignorance of the grounds he would have had to cross. Besides, the other having once discovered that he was watched, would not only have gone wide of his home, but, of course, would decline attending the Lieutenant at Southampton, lest unpleasant consequences should result therefrom to himself. Scarcely satisfied with his conduct, how-

ever, in not having exerted himself to detain him, Osrick continued his journey, and reached Southampton in time to dine with his brother officers at

THE MESS.

The Lieutenant was respected by every officer in the regiment, and all expressed themselves happy to see him. The dinner over, an extra proportion of wine gave interest to the festive board, as a complimentary tribute of respect to Osrick's welcome return.

In the course of the evening, the Colonel informed Osrick, that the regiment had received orders to hold itself in readiness to embark for Monte Video, at a moment's notice. The General who was to have the command of the expedition, he said, would shortly be at Portsmouth, for which place, doubtless, they would remove in a day or two.

"If it must be so," observed

ENSIGN

"it must—for my part, I have no objection to the smell of powder."

"On a field-day," remarked Captain Dreadnought.

"Why, on such occasions," with a forced smile, replied the other, "it is not only pleasant, but, what's better, harmless."

"The whizzing of the shot for me!" exclaimed Dreadnought; "that's the music that should be familiar, as well as acceptable, to the ears of a soldier."

Imbecile shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing.

It will sometimes happen, that the privilege of wearing the scarlet livery of honour, shall induce an individual to enroll his name with those of the brave defenders of their native isle, with whom no other consideration whatever could so have operated. Such an individual

was Imbecile. His friends were opulent. His father had realized a fortune, in pursuing the avocation of a tobacconist; and, to his son's entreaties, had purchased him an ensigncy, to render him, if not serviceable to his country, an acceptable plaything for the ladies.

To his figure, short, slender, and fragile, was united a constitution of rather a delicate description. Not a thought had he ever bestowed on the likelihood there was, on his joining the army, of his being called on to face the enemies of his country abroad; and he was one of those who deemed it completely impossible, that an opportunity could ever be afforded him of doing it at home.

Calculating, therefore, upon the certainty of personal security, his commission had been procured. He had not joined his regiment more than six months, during which time his conduct had been haughty and disgusting to the subordinates, (who, of course, disliked him generally)

rally), and often meanly servile to his superiors in command.

The order which the regiment had received sunk deep into his heart, and rankled there; he would have given his ears to have thrown up his commission, but the dread of being stigmatized as a coward prevented him; his principal hope, therefore, was, that the terrible order which banished sleep by night, and mental ease by day, would yet meet with a countermand.

The conversation at the mess pained him not a little; and the remarks of

CAPTAIN DREADNOUGHT

heightened those internal sensations of pusillanimity, which, in spite of his efforts to suppress, occasionally threatened externally to exhibit themselves.

Dreadnought had been in the army upwards of five-and-twenty years—his own merits and perseverance had raised

him to the command of a company, and he lived in the hope of deserving farther promotion. He could not boast of a very illustrious descent—but what was better, he could boast of an honourable one. His father had been an honest tradesman, who had brought up a large family by his own industry, and who had at all times been distinguished for fair dealings. Contrary to his wishes, his son had enlisted for a soldier—but the regimentals once fairly on his shoulders, he never attempted to induce him to take them off—it had been a livery of his own chusing, and he felt that if his boy never disgraced that, it could never disgrace him. Each opportunity that was afforded him, did he, with fatherly fervency, recommend to his son never to be deficient in the duties that his station required—nor were his admonitions disregarded—and joy gave increased animation to his heart, and affectionate exultation to his soul, when, at the expiration of the

the two first years of his service, he found that the exemplary conduct of his boy had obtained him the honour of bearing a British halbert.

Several years now passed away, during which time Serjeant Dreadnought had often shewed a bold front to the enemies of his country abroad, and had been rewarded with a pair of colours. A lieutenancy soon after followed; and farther services, together with considerable prize-money, in the end gave him the command of a company.

His father closed an honourable and useful life, soon after his son, as a Captain, had last returned from abroad—his son was with him in his dying moments, to receive his blessing, and to close his eyes, though the task had well nigh broken his manly heart. His mother paid the debt of nature many years before. Several brothers and sisters, whose welfares were dear to him, still lived to share his wealth—that wealth with which fortune

tune and his own correct conduct had blessed him.

At this time he was in his fortieth year, and having been once disappointed in the tender passion, death having robbed him of the object on whom his heart doted, and that too at a time when he thought her his own, as the nuptial morn was fixed, the recollection of his irreparable loss had prevented his forming any other connexion, that might have soothed his sorrows in the silken bonds of wedlock.

His manners were unsophisticated and blunt—but truth was his constant attendant, and his tongue was never known to be disgraced by the voluntary utterance of a falsehood.

His person was athletic, and not ungraceful—his countenance was ruddy, open, and expressive—deceit had no residence in it—and dignified Intrepidity had placed her strongest marks on his manly brow.

In his friendships he was sincere—in all his

his proceedings, determined—he would not hurt a worm in wanton cruelty—"But as for a foe, why he'd eat him alive." His was

TRUE COURAGE,

"Not the brutal force
Of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve
Of virtue and of reason. He who thinks
Without their aid to shine in deeds of arms,
Builds on a sandy basis his renown;
A dream, a vapour, or an ague fit,
May make a coward of him."

.....

"True courage is not where fermenting spirits
Mount in a troubled and unruly stream;
The soul's its proper seat, and reason there
Presiding, guides its cool or warmer motions."

On the ensanguined field of glory, thither led by imperious duty, and an injured country's cause, Dreadnought had

"Courted death, in the steel files of war,
When squadrons wither'd as the giant frost
Nor shrunk e'en when the hardiest of the field
Had paus'd upon the danger."

Though

Though terrible in battle, compassion dwelt in his heart, and a prostrate foe never solicited his clemency in vain. It was not so much to destroy the man he fought, as to gain the object of the war—and that victory was always the most grateful to his soul, that had been obtained with the slightest effusion of blood. He was cruel but to be just; and Honour acknowledged him as one of her most deserving votaries.

He had ever been partial to Osrick; and the Lieutenant, long since, had numbered him in the list of his most esteemed friends.

The next day, Osrick joined the regiment on

THE PARADE.

The brave fellows in the ranks appeared to regard his return with pleasure—they knew his worth, and could but rejoice at beholding him.

An

An officer may be a rigid disciplinarian, and yet live in the hearts of his men. Human nature revolts at oppression—the breath of curses floats in the air which a tyrant inhales, and fills his bosom with distrusts; but confidence, inspiring confidence, animates the soul of him whose actions are mercifully correct—and who knows that his conduct to his inferiors is entitled to their praise—their gratitude—their support.—In the hour of peril, he feels himself secure—he looks upon every object around him as on a friend he can trust—nor is he deceived—each strives to merit his applause—each cheerfully hazards life, to pluck the laurel from the reeking bed of war, which they hope to see blossom on their beloved commander's brow.

A general so esteemed, shall be the terror of his enemies; whilst the tyrant shall only be feared by those he vainly considers as his friends.

Two generals attended the parade on this

this occasion—Generals L—x and C—n; the men eyed them with looks beaming visible satisfaction—their talents, they knew, were undisputed—and that mild urbanity which ever accompanied their orders, had rendered them dear to British soldiers, whose obedience to their wills seemed more the spontaneous effect of grateful inclination, than the recollection of that superior power which commanded, and could enforce unqualified compliance. Obedience to such superiors, was the most pleasing part of their duty—in their presence, pleasure and duty went hand in hand, for loyal unanimity ever predominated.

The troops having passed the generals in review order, in open and close column, the line was again formed, and their destination for foreign service announced. Huzzas now rent the air—they exulted in the prospect of glory opening to them, and the benefits that their dear native land might derive therefrom—each man

appeared

appeared a hero—in truth he was so—nor will their grateful countrymen ever dispute their claim to the distinguishing epithet, so obtained and so deserved.

The parade over, and the subordinates dismissed, the officers congratulated each other upon what had happened; even Imbecile affected to be in high spirits, though his delicate countenance was much paler than usual.

That day the generals partook of

AN ENTERTAINMENT

given by the officers at the mess. The dinner was excellent, without being profuse—economy did not appear to have presided over the procuring of it, neither had ostentatious extravagance any thing to do with the furnishing of the festive board.

The table-cloth removed, the reins to hilarity was given, and its guidance was generally enjoyed. Many *vollies*, from

pieces

pieces loaded to the *muzzle* with *grape*, were *discharged*, in honour of England's King—the lasses they loved—and the heroes sworn to defend them, or perish in the attempt.

The fears of Imbecile were drowned in the genuine tide of mirth—every martial toast or sentiment, in the words of *Squire Acres*, in Sheridan's admirable comedy of the *Rivals*, was "a Grenadier's March" to his heart. Military subjects among them were liberally discussed—the veterans of honourable service

> "Fought all their battles o'er again,
> And thrice they routed all their foes,
> And thrice they slew the slain."

Several days now passed over, during which time an order for

THE REMOVAL

of the regiment to Portsmouth, for embarkation,

barkation, had been almost hourly expected; and during which time Osrick had been more mortified than disappointed, in not having seen the man who had promised to visit him at Southampton.

The whole of what had befallen him while he had been on leave of absence, he had communicated to his friend Captain Dreadnought, who laughed at some parts of the narrative, particularly his description of the ghost, and betrayed serious surprise at others; and some kind of discovery, he was of opinion, would have been made, had Grassingly been apprehended, as Osrick had at first designed.

The appearance of the man at Southhampton, that Osrick had overtaken while journeying thither, he conceived was very unlikely—*he* might have been concerned in the murder that had been committed in the cottage—and it was not feasible that he would risk being detected,

if

if such were the case, for the paltry consideration of a few pieces of gold. The Captain regretted that he had not been with Osrick when he last saw the man, as it would have given him pleasure to have been instrumental to his detention, as the cause of justice, he felt, would have been aided by such a measure.

The order at length arrived, for the removal of the regiment; and the day following the battalion entered Portsmouth.

The whole of the transports, however, destined to receive the respective regiments, had not yet arrived, consequently their embarkation was, of necessity, postponed.

In the afternoon subsequent to the day of their reaching Portsmouth, the Lieutenant accompanied Captain Dreadnought to take leave of a friend of his, who resided at Havant, where they dined, and

continued

continued until nearly midnight, before they remounted their horses to return to their quarters.

The night was bright—the moon was nearly at the full—and the stars, from a cloudless sky, contributed their influence to enlighten and enliven the world beneath.

The two soldiers, in close conversation, had left Havant about half a mile in their rear, when the rattling of a carriage advancing, arrested their attention. They both turned their heads to observe it—

A POST-CHAISE

and four horses, they distinctly perceived, the horses being nearly at the top of their speed. There was no out-rider. As the chaise passed them, one of the windows was suddenly and forcibly let down, and a shriek, and a cry of "Help! Help! for God's sake, help!" from a female, pierced their ears.

An appeal so forcible to the feelings of the soldiers, could not be withstood—they were both actuated by the same impulse—they might have been called to

THE RESCUE

of innocence, and neither felt inclined to neglect the summons. Without uttering a word, therefore, they both applied the spurs to their horses, and dashed forward.

Rapidly as the chaise went, they presently overtook it, and Dreadnought, in a thundering tone, commanded the postillions to halt. At first they did not appear disposed to obey him, but observing him and his companion take a pistol each from their holsters, they thought it prudent to comply with his request. Ere the chaise, however, was well stopped, one of the front glasses was lowered, and a hand, armed with a pistol, was thrust from it.

"Drop

"Drop the muzzle of your weapon," roared Dreadnought, presenting his own, "or you are dead in a second!"

The hand was instantly withdrawn. They now heard some person struggling in the chaise. "Who are you?" at length exclaimed some man within it, "and why, like plundering assassins, do you stay my progress on the King's highway?"

Dreadnought.—"Fair words, good Sir, and us and our intentions shall presently be made known to you."

Stranger.—"Let the carriage pass.—Postillions, drive on—drive on, I say."

Dreadnought.—"They dare as well beat out their own brains as obey you."

Stranger.—"What do you want?"

Dreadnought.—"To know who is your companion; and why the cry for assistance was uttered that brought us here."

The struggling in the chaise was continued. "Drive on," again vociferated

the stranger, "and if either of them attempts to interrupt you, that instant I'll shoot him."

"Be sure you take good aim," coolly remarked the Captain, "for if you miss either of us, you purchase your own destruction."

A piercing shriek from a female was again heard—but it was not repeated.

"Who have you with you?" now furiously exclaimed the Captain.

Stranger.—"Since you will force the secret from me," in more softened tones he answered, "know then I have my wife with me—she had eloped from my dwelling, but I overtook, and have preserved her from infamy."

Dreadnought.—"Let the lady speak—let her confirm your words that she is your wife, and we'll instantly depart."

Stranger.—"Alas! I fear she has fainted, through the alarm that you unwisely have been the cause of."

Dreadnought.

Dreadnought.—"Then for Heaven's sake let the door of the chaise be opened to give her air."

Stranger.—"We shall soon be at the end of the stage, if you'll let the carriage pass—Postillions, drive on!"

Dreadnought.—"Not an inch till I bid them, if they value their lives."

Stranger.—"That the lady is my wife, their words can confirm—therefore, in mercy, detain us no longer."

The Captain addressed the postillions. They both observed, that the lady in the carriage was the gentleman's wife.

Dreadnought.—"What is the gentleman's name?"

The postillions hesitated—the Captain smiled.

Dreadnought.—"It is truly singular that you should know that the parties in the carriage are man and wife, and, at the same time, be ignorant of their names."

The postillions, at the same instant,

exclaimed, the one *Martin*, and the other *Smith.*

Dreadnought.—" Which of you am I to believe?"

Stranger.—" Both! My name is *Martin Smith.* I insist that they instantly drive on."

Dreadnought.—" Excuse me—they must not proceed so suddenly—I am not satisfied that they have spoken the truth."

Stranger.—" But you will not dispute my word!"

Dreadnought.—" After what has happened, you must pardon me if I do."

Stranger.—" This insult shall not go unrevenged—to-morrow——"

Dreadnought.—" Will be time enough to adjust that difference—But the suspicions which you have excited in me must be allayed to-night."

Osrick, hitherto, had been a silent spectator of what had passed—He had been struck with astonishment at hearing the voice of the person in the chaise—the tones

tones of it, he thought, were familiar to him—and actuated by the growing poignancy of his feelings, he now loudly pronounced the name of "Belmont!"

The person in the chaise, who had before been leaning with his head partially out of the window, fell suddenly back on the seat, and, from what they could discover, was greatly agitated.

Dreadnought.—"Lieutenant, do you know him?"

It was indeed Belmont! The surprise of so suddenly and unexpectedly meeting with the Lieutenant, had nearly overcome him—One resource only, as both threats and entreaties had failed, was now left, that afforded him the slightest prospect of escaping—therefore, somewhat roused by the Captain's interrogatory, he replied to it—"Yes—he does know me, and will vouch for my conduct as a gentleman. Lieutenant Somerton, the present affair may seem strange and inexplicably mysterious to

you—but to-morrow I will explain all—therefore, I beg you will permit the chaise to pass on."

Dreadnought.—"Impossible!"

Osrick.—"To comply with your request, Belmont, is indeed impossible—How come you to be in this part of the world, and who is the distressed, if not dying object with you?"

Dreadnought.—"Belmont! Not a minute ago he said his name was *Martin Smith!*"

Belmont.—"I did so—but to-morrow you will admit that my motives were sufficiently strong to justify my conduct."

Dreadnought.—"I must, and will be assured of that to-night."

Belmont.—"Mr. Somerton, as a friend, as a gentleman, I entreat—I demand your assistance."

Osrick.—"After your voluntary utterance of a falshood, I must refuse to give it you. Who is the lady in the carriage with you? For aught you know, your inhumanity

inhumanity may already have destroyed her."

Belmont trembled, and was silent.

The glimmering of a taper was seen through the latticed windows of a low house, about three hundred yards distance from the road, and thither the Captain thundered a mandate to the postillions to drive the chaise—"And hark ye," said he, looking first at one, and then the other, "*Mr. Martin*, and you *Mr. Smith*, betray the slightest inclination to disobey my commands, and of such lying, paltry scoundrels, I shall be tempted to make worm's-meat. Proceed, therefore, and be submissive."

Belmont remained silent, and the postillions quickly removed the chaise to the low house as directed.

"Dismount," said Dreadnought to one of the postillions, "and knock at the door." The man was off the horse in an instant, but not before a middle-

aged woman, who had heard the chaise approach, had opened the door.

The Captain and Osrick now also dismounted, and gave one of the postillions their horses to hold, the former observing to him, "that one man was sufficient to look to the others."

The Captain then remarked to the woman, that a lady who had been taken ill in the chaise was in need of her assistance, and shelter under her roof, until she was sufficiently recovered to pursue her journey in safety.

The woman now threw open the door wide, and retired, but presently returned with a light.

Osrick, in the interim, had opened the door of the chaise, from which Belmont, pale and trembling, but without uttering a word, or seeming to bestow a thought on his companion, descended, and hastily entered the house.

Osrick now, assisted by his friend, the Captain,

Captain, lifted an elegantly-dressed female from the carriage, apparently lifeless. Her hair was dishevelled, and which, falling in ringlets over her face, nearly hid it. They were not long in removing her into an apartment in the rustic dwelling, where such restoratives as the place afforded, hartshorn, &c. were presently administered to recover her.

The dropping ringlets being removed from the face of

THE FAIR SUFFERER,

a countenance, though pale as even death could make it, yet lovely as nature, in a lavish mood, could form one, presented itself. A tear, at the idea of what her distress must have been, so to have overpowered her, stood in Dreadnought's eye —but Osrick recoiled with amazement, faintly, but distinctly, articulating the name of *Alethea!*

"Do you know her, Mr. Somerton?" enquired

enquired the Captain—"I do! I do!" respired Osrick, whose feelings now superseded the power of utterance, and he wept.

"Poor thing!" ejaculated the woman, "I fear she's dead!—and yet, in death, how lovely!"

"Dead!" repeated Osrick, the blood forsaking his cheeks, and descending to the labouring heart, chilled the vital stream that flowed there. Reechoing back the horrific word, cold drops of agony trickled down his pallid face, and tremblings seized his limbs. "Gracious Heaven!" he at length exclaimed, "has the villain then murdered her?" His eyes now turned, in the expectation of beholding Belmont, and for the first time, he discovered that he was absent.

Osrick, unknown to himself, had cherished a hopeless passion for Alethea—hopeless, because he considered her as betrothed to Belmont. The latent flame, therefore, which his friendship for Belmont,

mont, without extinguishing, had prevented from kindling into a blaze, totally to destroy his peace, now raged with a fervidness the less controllable, from the check it had previously received.

He recollected the interest she had appeared to take in his fate, when last they parted—and, for the first time, he felt that his happiness was so enlinked with her's, that life to him would be but as a barren waste, yielding no good to the possessor without her.

Dropping on his knees, almost unconscious of what he did, he now pressed a hand of the lifeless Alethea—chafed its palm, which his tears moistened, and mentally put up a prayer for her speedy recovery, as sincere as ever reached the throne of grace.

The Captain, in the interim, did not remain an inactive spectator—one arm of the lovely girl rested on his shoulder, as he stooped to support her in the chair, and, in the silent agony of expectation,

awaited

awaited the moment when she should betray symptoms of returning life—though, from what the woman had uttered, who had now been joined by another, much farther advanced in years, he had began to fear that such a moment would never arrive.

As Osrick pressed the hand, as white as polished marble, and as cold, on which his tears had fallen, a sensation of sudden joy shot to his heart—for the pulse of Alethea fluttered to his pressure, as though renewed in action by the vital warmth of his.

"She lives! she lives!" he exclaimed, "thank God, she lives, and we may yet be happy!"

The impassioned exclamation appeared much to affect the Captain—"Be not too sanguine," he replied; "to me her spirit seems fled, with kindred angels to associate for ever!"

A deep-drawn sigh, at length, evinced to the anxious group, that their labour to restore

restore her would be crowned with success, and the irradiations of gladness illumined their features.

Osrick still continued on his knees—he still pressed her hand, while in indescribable rapture, in which hope and fear had equal influence, he gazed in silence on her lovely face.

Her eyes, at length, were opened—and as reason began to resume its empire, past occurrences occupied the regions of thought. Still imagining herself in the power of Belmont, she shrieked with dread, and indistinctly articulated—"Vile wretch—I never will be your's—Will no one save me?—Oh! Heaven, mercy, mercy!"

Struggling for freedom, her little strength was soon exhausted, and, gasping for breath, she again appeared fast verging towards insensibility. At this critical moment, Osrick, in the agony of his feelings, exclaimed—"Oh Alethea! all here are friends—Be composed, my sweet

sweet girl, and save us from the misery of seeing you so unhappy."

The well-known voice of Osrick recalled her fleeting spirits—Struck with astonishment, she gazed about her—their eyes met—a faint shriek issued from her lips—but it was the shriek of surprised gladness, and the next instant she sprung into his arms.

Osrick pressed her to his bosom in speechless extasy—a moment of such exquisite delight, he had never before enjoyed—his soul was in Elysium, and partook of the joys of the blest.

The scene thrilled through the frame of the Captain—the sensation he felt could scarcely be defined—tears glistened in his eyes—and the female attendants sobbed aloud.

"She is mine," now respired Osrick, "mine, only mine!"

A copious flood of tears now came to the relief of Alethea, and which recalled the spirits of Osrick from the pleasing delirium

delirium in which they had indulged. "My sweet girl," said he, as he raised her in his arms, "why this despondency? all here are friends, that will protect and strive to make you happy."

His words aroused Alethea to a sense of her situation—The crimson blush of the rose diffused itself over her features, as she found herself in the arms of Osrick—and that too in the presence of several persons whom she had never before seen. Gently struggling for liberty, however, she permitted him to support her to a chair, and her tears again flowed freely.

The efforts of Osrick having, at last, restored her to a comparative degree of composure, the situation from which he had assisted in rescuing her was adverted to, which, naturally, occasioning Belmont's absence to be noticed, the Captain left the room in quest of him.

Osrick now adventured to make some enquiries respecting her being found with Belmont.

"Oh!

"Oh! mention not his hated name!" she energetically exclaimed. "Belmont is a villain—Oh Heavens! what will my friends conclude from my absence?"

"Where are they, my sweet girl?" enquired Osrick.

"At Chichester," she replied.

"Who are at Chichester?" said Osrick.

"Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, and Constance—we arrived there the day before yesterday." answered Alethea. "How shall I once more get to them?"

"The chaise is at the door," said Osrick, "that shall reconvey you to them, the moment you are sufficiently recovered to bear the fatigue of the removal."

"Let it be this instant then," said Alethea, rising; "the distance cannot be great—But——"

"I will accompany you," added Osrick, anticipating what she would have said, "if you feel yourself sufficiently resolute to trust yourself with me."

Her

Her eyes beamed pleasure through her tears as she accepted his offer, and Osrick supported her to the chaise.

Osrick had just assisted her into the vehicle, when the Captain joined him, to whom, in few words, he made known his intention of accompanying Alethea to Chichester. Dreadnought, of course, approved of the measure, promised to send a person on with his horse, and even to guard the chaise, in person, as far as the entrance of Chichester—"For," said he, "as Belmont has succeeded in effecting his escape, we cannot be too careful of our fair charge, until we deliver her to the protection of her friends." The chaise now drove off, the postillions having received their orders from Osrick; and Dreadnought thundered in their ears his intention of seeing that those orders were properly executed.

mentally said Dreadnought, for in that light he now considered them, are happy; and Osrick, he thought, was one of the most fortunate of men.

He was not long in procuring a person to follow the chaise with the Lieutenant's horse—the master of the humble dwelling, who had been soberly merry-making with some friends at Havant, and which had kept part of his family from bed at that late hour, arrived just as the chaise moved away from his door, and willingly undertook the task. He galloped after Dreadnought, therefore, until they had reached the entrance of Chichester, when the Captain desired him to go on without him, to halt at the house where the chaise halted, and to inform the gentleman in the chaise, when he should take his horse from him, that he, Captain Dreadnought, was

was shaping his course back for Portsmouth.

Osrick, as the Captain suspected, was indeed happy in being left alone with Alethea; and though the tears continued to bedew her cheeks, as she reflected on the dangers she had escaped, her heart palpitated with joy, in being supported by her deliverer—and that deliverer, of all men, him whom she most esteemed and loved.

Osrick rejoiced to find her so much recovered—he neglected not the opportunity of telling her how dear her welfare was to him—nor did Alethea prudishly endeavour to conceal that pleasure which such a declaration inspired.

The postillions, at length, stopped the chaise at the house to which they had been directed to drive; and at Osrick's command, one of them presently dismounted, and rapped at the door. In an instant the door was opened, Mr. Stokes soon after making his appearance. Which most predominated at the instant, his

his joy at beholding Alethea, or his surprise at so unexpectedly seeing Osrick, it would be difficult to determine.

"My dear Alethea," at length said Mr. Stokes, "what anxiety have I not been under on your account!"

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Osrick, "that I have the pleasure of safely returning her to you."

Alethea was too overcome at beholding Mr. Stokes, to utter a word—she felt grateful to him for the uneasiness which he had expressed to have felt for her absence; and partly supported by him, and partly by Osrick, she reached the drawing-room, where Mrs. Stokes, and Constance, who had heard the chaise stop at the door, and had learnt who it contained, were ready to receive her.

"Bless me, Alethea!" exclaimed Mrs. Stokes, the moment she saw the trembling girl, "why where have you been? Mr. Somerton too! Alethea, what, from this, am I to conclude?"

"That

"That but for Mr. Somerton," she ejaculated, bursting into tears, "you, probably, would never have seen me again."

Mrs. Stokes had, at first, regarded the Lieutenant with an eye of suspicion—the known rectitude of his character was forgotten by her in the surprise of the moment; but the words of Alethea in an instant conveyed to her the assurance, that Osrick had done nothing to merit her reproof.

Alethea, at length, became sufficiently composed, to relate all that she could remember of what had happened to her through the

of Belmont, and Osrick supplied the rest; when, to the welcome which Mr. and Mrs. Stokes gave him, was united their sincerest thanks.

From Alethea's narration, it appeared that two days after the Lieutenant had

quitted the Lodge, Belmont had dared to insult her, by offering her independence, at the price of her honour—Horror-struck at the proposal, she had hurried from his presence—but so degraded had she felt by the circumstance, that she wanted the courage to disclose it to Mr. and Mrs. Stokes. The visits of Belmont, therefore, had not been discontinued to the family, though she seldom after saw him, as she had pleaded indisposition, to seclude herself from his sight.

Business requiring the presence of Mr. Stokes at Chichester, it was agreed that his family should accompany him, such an excursion promising to be far from disagreeable. Belmont, on learning their determination, made an offer of being of the party, which was accepted; they, therefore, reached Chichester together; and a house for a week, sufficiently large to accommodate them, was soon after engaged. Still Alethea had contrived to avoid being left alone with the object who had

had so grossly insulted her; but fully resolved to make both instances known to her friends, should the insult ever be repeated. A ball at the public rooms at Chichester, at length, being announced, Mr. and Mrs. Stokes were invited to attend, with their daughter and Alethea, and which they accordingly did.

An accident which had happened to one of the wheels of his carriage, had induced Mr. Stokes to engage a postchaise for that evening, and in which Mr. and Mrs. Stokes were first conveyed to the rooms, and then Belmont, Constance, and Alethea.

The rooms were tolerably full of company when they arrived; and Constance and Alethea being introduced to partners by the master of the ceremonies, were soon of the number of votaries of the goddess of the light fantastic toe. Belmont did not dance, but passed the greater part of the evening in conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, who, at

about half an hour after eleven o'clock, hinted to Belmont their inclination to retire, and who, soon after, informed them that their chaise was at the door, to which he instantly accompanied them with Constance, and requested that the chaise, as soon as they had been set down, might return for him and Alethea.

Alethea, engaged in the dance, knew nothing of her friends having left the ball-room, until informed of the circumstance by Belmont, who, at the same time, acquainted her that the chaise had returned, and was then waiting at the door to convey her to them.

Much regretting that an unexpected circumstance should, though but for a few minutes, leave her alone with Belmont, yet in nowise suspecting his daring designs against her, she permitted him to lead her to the chaise, which was drawn up at the door, into which she instantly ascended, and he presently took a seat by

by her side. The chaise then drove off at a very rapid rate, and had actually diverged beyond the limits of the city, ere Alethea discovered that four horses were attached to it, or the slightest suspicion of the new act of treachery of Belmont, had been entertained by her. To her first expression of surprise, Belmont, in the most impassioned strain, addressed her—had the effrontery to acknowledge that the whole proceeding had been a contrivance of his own to get her into his power, as he found he could not live without her, and that nothing but death should induce him to relinquish the valuable prize he had obtained.

The tears and remonstrances of Alethea, to induce him to restore her to her friends, were ineffectual—he had a house, he said, ready for her reception, in the neighbourhood of Salisbury, of which she should be entire mistress, and where the whole of his fortune should be at her disposal.

At a moment when almost fainting with the acutest anguish of apprehension, the appearance of horsemen on the road had inspired her with the hope of relief; and her conduct had happily actuated the Lieutenant and Captain Dreadnought to ride forward to her rescue.

Belmont, to prevent her uttering a similar shriek of alarm, had forced an handkerchief into her mouth, which she had vainly struggled to release herself from, until her powers, and the recollection of her dreadful situation, were alike lost in a temporary suspension of life.

The rage of Mr. Stokes against Belmont was extreme—He pronounced him, and justly, to be an unprincipled miscreant—breaking through the laws of hospitality and honour, and regardless of whose peace he destroyed, in promoting his own sensual gratifications.

Mrs. Stokes, and Constance also, now entertained a true opinion of his real character;

racter; and a total interdiction of all intercourse with him, was the result.

Osrick's attentions to Alethea were respectfully pointed and tender;—rest being at length recommended to her, he retired, with a promise of visiting her, from Portsmouth, on the following morning.

Love had sunk deep in the Lieutenant's heart, long before the painful incidents of that night had been witnessed; but

HOPE

had never before fanned the dormant flame, and given new energies and views to reflection.

"Hope's a lover's staff;" and amply were the Lieutenant's spirits supported by it. Alethea, in thought, he regarded as his own; and the time, he imagined, was not very distant, when she would ratify his claim at the altar.

"Hope, with a goodly prospect feeds the eye,
Shews from a rising ground possession nigh;
Shortens the distance, or o'erlooks it quite,
So easy 'tis to travel with the sight."

He was not long in galloping from Chichester to Portsmouth, but Dreadnought he found had retired to rest before he arrived there; consequently, he saw him not until he met him at the morning's parade, when he learnt from him that orders had been given for the immediate embarkation of their regiment.

He related to Dreadnought the promise he was under of revisiting Alethea at Chichester, and endeavoured to prevail upon the Captain to accompany him; but that he steadily refused to do, and expressed some apprehensions, lest Osrick, at that juncture, (even for so short time,) should not be enabled to get leave of absence.

absence ere the sails were unfurled for America.

Though equally friendly in his expressions, the Lieutenant observed an unusual coldness in the manner of Dreadnought—his mind seemed ill at ease; and but for his known intrepidity and willingness to engage in active service against the enemies of his country abroad, Osrick would have imagined that the alteration he noticed in him proceeded from a secret reluctance, at that time, to leave England.

By Dreadnought's, and his own interest combined, Osrick, at length, obtained leave once more to visit Chichester; but he, at the same time, also received positive orders to be ready to embark with the troops at day-break, on the following morning.

Hope still kept the Lieutenant's spirits buoyant. His absence, he considered, would be but of short duration, and the hand of Alethea the reward of his return.

He reached Chichester some time before the dinner hour—Alethea's eyes sparkled with pleasure at beholding him, and Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, and Constance, expressed that they had been anxiously expecting him for some time.

"It was with great difficulty," said Osrick, "that I could obtain permission to come hither at all—yet I own it would have given me much pain to have left England without saying

ADIEU,

to friends so near to me, whom I so sincerely love and esteem."

But little was said in the course of the afternoon, respecting the affair of the preceding night—the name of Belmont had become disgusting to the whole of them, and each appeared to endeavour to forget that such a villain had ever been classed in the catalogue of their acquaintance.

Much as Osrick wished to be alone with Alethea,

Alethea, yet could he devise no pretext to take her, even for a few minutes, from her friends. But as there is discourse in eyes, oft-times more eloquently expressive of the genuine feelings of the heart than words can delineate, what was passing in his mind was amply comprehended by Alethea; nor was the expression that beamed from her's the less understood by him.

He felt enraptured at the silent though potent assurances that she gave him of the deep and heart-felt regard she possessed for him; and which were as forcibly answered on his part—unalterable love and constancy, though not a word was uttered, being reciprocally breathed, and unequivocally understood between them.

The time of separation at length arrived—Weeks, months, and perhaps years, would elapse, ere they met again, if ever—it was a service of danger, on which Osrick was going, and the possibility, if

not the probability, there was of his leaving England, never more to return to it, did not escape them.

Their parting wishes for each others welfare, were affectionate and sincere. Alethea, though she exerted every effort to repress the emotions that agonized her heart and agitated her frame, could not prevent a copious flood of tears from moistening her lovely countenance—nor had Osrick a much superior command over himself.

"Adieu!" he, at length, exclaimed, "my esteemed, my valued friends—you will often be present in my thoughts; and I feel the sweet, the reviving assurance, that we shall shortly meet again."

"And as a token," observed Alethea, summoning all her powers, "that there are some persons in the world who are under the deepest obligations to you, and who are much interested in your fate, take this," presenting a something to him carefully enveloped in white paper; "but

"but do not examine it now; yet when you shall hereafter gaze upon it, think of the *giver*, and of those friends who may chance to be at a distance from you."

Osrick took the packet, and instantly conveyed it to his pocket. "I needed not such a remembrancer," he replied, "be it what it may, for my *love*—my regard—my esteem for all of you, must live while I live, and its recollection will be the principal sweetener of my days."

Osrick having mounted his horse, now proceeded, at a slow pace, for Portsmouth, revolving on the delights of the few last hours of his life, and looking forward to the time, when Hymen should crown his hopes, and give the fair object of his soul's dearest wishes to his arms.

It was yet early in the evening, and passing the western limits of Havant, the glimmering of the taper from the window of the cottage in which he had been with Alethea the night before, caught his at-

tention, and inspired him with an unconquerable desire to revisit it.

He found no difficulty in gaining admission; mine host was now at home, and good-naturedly undertook to hold his horse, while Osrick dismounted, and conversed with his wife and the good people within.

Belmont, he found, had not returned to the cottage to make any enquiries, which he rather suspected he would have done, after he and Alethea had quitted it; therefore, of what became of him, or what road he had taken, all were equally ignorant.

The cleanliness of the cottage, and the extreme neatness of its occupiers, now struck Osrick's notice; and the intelligent remarks of a female of very advanced age, interested, and, in the end, commanded his particular attention. Though she had numbered nearly ninety years, her intellects had suffered but little

little decay; and the vermillion glow of health yet bloomed freshly on her cheeks. Her eyes were dark and strong, and yet retained their lustre; and the *tout ensemble* of the countenance was highly prepossessing, perhaps the more so, from a cast of resignant melancholy, which generally pervaded her features. Osrick found her mental acquirements above the common order; and during the course of his continuance with her, he learnt that her name was

ADELGITHA,

and the following particulars of her life:—

When nineteen years old, she had given her hand in marriage to the man of her choice—he was about two years her senior, and possessed her undivided heart. Their circumstances, though not affluent, were easy; and their attachment mutual. Their union, therefore, promised length of happiness

piness to both. Four months passed away in bliss uninterrupted—they lived but for each other—content was their inmate, and the sunshine of virtuous hilarity irradiated their dwelling.

About this time, the death of a relation in America, gave her husband increase of property—but it became necessary for him to take a journey to Boston, to secure it. Adelgitha being pregnant, it was deemed unsafe for her to accompany him in the voyage; it was therefore settled, that he should go without her; and, with all the speed that love could give him, return, when the business that required his presence had been adjusted.

The hour of parting arrived. Locked in each others arms, they, for some time, could only evince the agonies they felt, by tears. Their hearts were nearly breaking. The chaise was waiting at the door; and with a last kiss, their lips moistened by the tears that had fallen on them, he,

at

at length, summoning all his resolution, tore himself from her fond and affectionate embrace.

The rattling of the chaise, as it drove off, to Adelgitha sounded like the knell of departed happiness, and anguished every fibre of her feeling heart. "He's gone—my dear Henry is gone," she exclaimed, "and Heaven knows if ever we shall meet again." The word *never*, she fancied, was replied to her impassioned exclamation, in a voice unknown; such was the torture of her mind at the moment, a cold trembling seized her—respiration became impeded—a thick mist seemed to gather before the organs of sight, and life, for the instant, deserted her.

Several days elapsed, ere the consolations of her friends could tranquillize her mind, and reconcile her to the separation.

It had been agreed, that all letters from Henry to Adelgitha should be enclosed

to

to Mrs. Mentzen, the person of whom they had hired apartments, as she was better known in the town than themselves, and mistakes, thereby, were the less liable to occur at the post-office.

Henry had been absent six months, when Adelgitha gave birth to a daughter. About this time, through the medium of Mrs. Mentzen, she received the first letter from her husband. He had reached Boston in safety, but had found the affairs that took him thither, much more complex and difficult to be adjusted, than he had been prepared to expect; therefore, when he should be enabled to return, he could not then positively decide, but hoped to have it in his power to give his heart's dearest treasure, his Adelgitha, that information by the next packet.

The letter was written in a strain of the purest love and affection; and, besides, contained a handsome remittance for her support.

For four years Adelgitha continued to receive

receive letters and remittances, by almost every packet that arrived from America; but still the momentous business that had taken Henry from her, remained unsettled. Her little daughter, which daily improved in health and beauty, was now her principal solace; and her orizons were daily offered up to Heaven, that she might shortly have the dear delight of presenting the infant to her father.

Five years, at length, elapsed, and during the last twelve months of which, Adelgitha had received no letters from her husband. Apprehension's acutest griefs now sunk deep into her heart, and lacerated her very soul. Another year passed away, and still no tidings of Henry had been procured, though letters, directed to him, she believed, had left England by almost every packet that had sailed.

Every possible enquiry, to learn the fate of Henry, was now made of those recently returned from America, and in every

every other way that affection could suggest; but all were fruitless.—Henry had but few relations that Adelgitha knew, and they, of every thing appertaining to the subject of her applications, were as ignorant as herself.

The mental agonies of the afflicted wife, which banished sleep from her pillow by night, and quietude from her dwelling by day, may be better conceived than expressed. 'Twas strange, she thought, 'twas passing strange, that no intelligence of Henry could be procured—not even a breath of information, to fan the spark of hope which yet was unextinguished in her breast, so that expectation's cheering influence might partially dispel the growing gloomy horrors of her mind.

"The eating canker Grief, with wasteful spite,
Preys on the blood of youth and beauty;"

and visible now became its daily ravages on the fading form of the ill-starred Adelgitha.

"A thou-

"A thousand thoughts prey'd on her tortur'd soul,
And whirling fancy turn'd her senses round."

The unexpected and lengthened disappointments in remittances had, ere this, compelled Adelgitha to solicit the support of her own relations, which had not been denied to her. To reduce her expenditure, lodgings of an inferior description to what Henry had engaged, she had removed to; and where, with scarcely any other comfort than what her daughter afforded her, whose presence only saved her from despair, seven tedious years she remained, and yet no account of him she only wished to hear of, had reached her.

Reduced by sorrow and daily pinings, she, at length, concluded her Henry dead. A diminution of his affection towards her she had never doubted—she was too well acquainted with the genuine qualities of his heart, to suppose that he would voluntarily have deserted her; and death

death only, she felt, could so completely have effected their separation.

Religious resignation now began to pour its healing balm into her wounded mind; and she felt indescribable pleasure, in the consciousness that in "another and a better world," she and Henry should meet again.

"When the wounds of woe are healing,
When the heart is all resign'd,
'Tis the solemn feast of feeling,
'Tis the Sabbath of the mind."

Twelve years had rolled heavily away, when Mrs. Mentzen, whose apartments she had formerly occupied, being at the point of death, urgently requested to see Adelgitha. To such a call, of course, she was attentive. On entering the expiring woman's chamber, the poor object, withered to the bone by sickness, turned her sunken eyes toward her, and as distinctly as her remaining strength would admit of, entreated her forgiveness. Surprised

prised that forgiveness should be asked from one, who had never, to her knowledge, offended her, words, expressive of her feelings, in the tenderest tones were uttered, which, by the other, were only answered by tremblings and tears.

To be brief, reader, what must the feelings of the afflicted Adelgitha have been, when the wretched invalid informed her, that, until within the last twelve months, letters and remittances had been regularly sent, enclosed to her, from Henry;—which letters, principally without reading, she had consigned to the flames, and applied the remittances that came with them to her own use.

Speechless with horror, Adelgitha heard the unexpected acknowledgment. The warm hope of once more beholding her husband, however, presently succeeded, and thrilled her soul with extacy. The property that she had been robbed of, was nothing in her estimation—"O tell me, tell me," she exclaimed, "in mercy tell

tell me how, and where my Henry is, and I'll bless you with my latest breath—and Heaven will forgive and bless you also?"

The dying penitent, however, could not comply with her request. She had never sufficiently examined the letters, to know even from whence they came. All that she remembered was a passage in the last, in which the writer expressed himself nearly heart-broken in not having heard from his wife; and that from that time he should discontinue writing to England, under the dreadful conclusion that she was dead.

Terrible were the effects her words produced on Adelgitha—they chilled the vital current at her heart—not a tear, however, would come to her relief—and in the most horrid state of apathy, she continued for many successive days. When reason resumed its empire in her mind, she was informed, that the wretched woman who had been the cause of all her afflictions had expired in convulsions, a

few

few minutes after she had been borne from her apartment.

Every possible method that could be suggested, was again practised, to find the husband of Adelgitha; but fruitless did they prove as the former; and from that time, down to the present, no information whatever had been gained of him.

The healing balm of resignation which poor Adelgitha had began to taste, she had been unfortunately deprived of, by the vain hopes inspired by the dying confession of the treacherous Mrs. Mentzen. Though nearly seventy years have elapsed since that event, yet has not Adelgitha relinquished the deluding expectation of seeing her lost Henry again—the sight of the post-boy with a letter, old as she is, will occasion her emotions difficult to be described; and at which time, tears will rush from her eyes, and she will loudly lament the unexampled severity of her fate.

Adelgitha

would willingly have declined partaking of this new instance of

LIBERALITY,

as he had been more than satisfied with the compensation he had met with for his trouble the night before, not only from Osrick, but Dreadnought also.

Osrick, however, would not admit of his refusal, observing to him, that it might afford him an extra opportunity of providing comforts for Adelgitha.

"Bless her," exclaimed the man, "she wants for nothing; nor shall she, whilst I have health, and the use of my limbs, to work for her support."

Osrick now shook him by the hand; promised, if he lived to return to England, to see him again; called him an honest fellow, and departed.

It was true, Osrick had not had a very large sum about him to bestow—but as genuine liberality, he considered, did not

so

so much consist in the sum given, as in what was given being well applied, he could but feel satisfied in what he had done.

" Bounty's self,
When ill conferr'd, is prodigality."

" Ce qu'on nomme liberalité, n'est souvent que la vanité de donner, que nous aimons mieux que ce que nous donnons."

The action, therefore, must stamp its own value.

" The truly generous is the truly wise;
And he who loves not others, lives unblest."

Revolving in his mind the horrid state of uncertainty in which nearly the whole life of Adelgitha had been passed, Osrick continued, at little better than a walking pace, to proceed to Portsmouth. The more deeply he reflected upon the nature of the tale he had heard, the more painful became the sensations which it excited. Good God! thought he, what must the tor-

tures of the unhappy woman have been! for what condition can be so dreadful as one of perpetual

SUSPENS'?

To know the worst, carries a consolation, of which, to fear the worst, is destitute. Delusive Hope, which daily ushers disappointment to our wishes, gives poignancy to misery. How often then is Hope the enemy of the wretched! Hope destroyed, resignation might tranquillize the troubled mind, but which the life of hope forbids! Hope is the offspring of Suspense, and the parent of Disappointment. It is the prerogative of Hope to still the tempests of the passions which suspense may raise, if it be only that her offspring, Disappointment, may not remain inactive. By disappointment, the hurricane of thought is again renewed—suspense may again predominate in all its gloomy

gloomy horrors, till hope once more obtrudes, to promise and deceive.

The lingering state of uncertainty in which Adelgitha had passed so many years, a prey to hope and disappointment, Osrick thought of with compassion and astonishment—compassion for what she had endured, and astonishment that in despite of such endurances, she could yet survive.

Lost in contemplation, sad but interesting, Osrick continued his course for Portsmouth, until a pistol, discharged over a thick fence to his right, the ball from which grazed his hat, aroused him from his gloomy reverie.

Checking his horse, and then pulling him suddenly round, he would have plunged with him through the hedge, to have discovered and punished the villain who had thus aimed to destroy him, had not the close entwinement of the numerous branches rendered such a proceeding impossible. Drawing a pistol, therefore,

from his holster, he rode as close to the fence as he could guide the animal; but the person who had made the attempt on his life, nor any one, was to be perceived; nor was the least noise heard, to direct him to the spot where the miscreant lay concealed.

Dismounting, and tying his horse to a thicket, he then more accurately, but as ineffectually, continued to examine the place, until

CAUTION,

very prudently, whispered him to discontinue the search.

"Though brave deeds be warm at first conceiv'd,
Let the best purpose cool, nor miss your blow,
More firm and sure the hand of courage strikes,
When it obeys the watchful eyes of caution."

The treacherous monster, though so safe concealed, from that concealment might yet review the movements of him for whose blood

blood he thirsted; and though he dared not meet him front to front, a second discharge in ambush might be made with a correcter aim, and more certain effect, than the first. This, in the end, occurred to Osrick, together with the cautious necessity there was of having a partner in his pursuit, unless he meant that his life should be the probable sacrifice of his folly.

Remounting his horse, therefore, he galloped about an hundred yards from where the pistol had been fired, and then again halted, in the warm hope that his supposed departure would induce the cowardly assassin to shew himself; but in that he was disappointed; nor could any person approaching be discovered, to afford him the assistance he wanted.

Unwilling, however, to quit the place, he lingered about it for several hours; but no person came to his relief, nor any new discovery could he make, though in the suspicions that haunted him, Belmont was not forgotten.

Wearied, at length, with watching, and feeling the necessity of his returning to Portsmouth, he applied the spurs to his horse, and soon arrived there; but it was at so late an hour that the officers of his regiment had retired for the night.

Endeavouring to shake the unpleasant adventure of the night from his mind, as he entered his chamber, his thoughts naturally reverted to Alethea, and the packet she had given him at parting, and which he now hastily drew from his pocket.

His pleasure was beyond expression, when, on removing the papers that enveloped it, he beheld

A MINIATURE,

well executed, and set in gold, of the loved object from whom he had received it.—Next to the original, it was the prize he most wished for; and he gazed on it with

with a rapture, such as those only who have loved with a passion pure and fervent as his was, can conceive.

" *LOVE*

Ne'er should die:
'Tis the soul's cordial: 'Tis the font of life;
Therefore should spring eternal in the breast."

.....

" Where strictest virtue, softest love unite,
How fierce the rapture, and the blaze how bright!
True joys proceed from innocence and love;
Th' unsteady by this lesson may improve,
Disclaim their vices, and forget to rove."

.....

" 'Tis love combin'd with guilt alone, that melts
The soften'd soul to cowardice and sloth;
But virtuous passion prompts the great resolve,
And fans the slumbering spark of heav'nly fire."

.....

" Love is a passion,
Which kindles honour into noble acts."

.....

" Love is the noblest frailty of the mind."

A thousand times did he kiss the precious gift he had received—it seemed to give him assurance of the many happy moments that were in store for him, to be enjoyed with the object of his adoration; and thrilling his soul with pleasing hopes, gave new extacies to thought.

Suspending the miniature by a ribbon from his neck, and resolving ever to wear it next his heart, he, at length, retired to bed, and when sleep o'erpowered him, his Alethea was present in his dreams, from which he was awakened, at an early hour, by his servant, who informed him that every thing was ready for

THE EMBARKATION,

the greater part of his regiment being already on ship-board.

Osrick quickly dressed himself, and was not long ere he was to be found among the busy warriors that were waiting for the boats by the river side.

All now was bustle, and, to a casual observer, confusion, but with which regularity of proceeding was considerably more connected than at first met the eye.

The soldiers were in high spirits, and their exulting acclamations were spontaneously sent forth, as the respective barks floated them from the shore.

Before mid-day, the remainder of the troops, to sail in this instance, were shipped; and Osrick and Captain Dreadnought were arguing upon the probable result of the expedition, in one of the transports.

A settled gloom yet enveloped the faculties of Dreadnought, which Osrick noticed, but without saying any thing to him on the subject, conceiving it a stronger mark of friendship, in some cases, to be silent, rather than to importune for a confidence which, if at all, would be reluctantly bestowed.

Their conversation, therefore, entirely

rested upon the pursuit they were both honourably engaged in—of, according to their opinion, the certain success of the British arms against the hostile multitude at Buenos Ayres—and, in this opinion, they were not singular, for it was generally enjoyed by every individual in the British army.

The wind was now fair, and the signal-gun for sailing had been discharged, when a boat, running alongside the transport, delivered several letters, among which were two for Osrick. They were forwarded from the post-office, the embarkation having taken place prior to their being regularly sorted, which had prevented their previous delivery.

The first which Osrick opened was from his father, and contained

DISAGREEABLE INFORMATION,

and news of Belmont. The letter, in fact, was the identical one which his father

ther had penned in his severe moments of agony, after detecting Belmont with his wife in the shrubbery.

Osrick perused its contents, with mingled astonishment and anger. That Mrs. Somerton should voluntarily have become a pupil of dishonour, however, he could not believe, though his father wrote in the most positive terms on the subject. The innocence and exemplary rectitude of Mrs. Somerton's principles and conduct, he never expected that any one would attempt to impeach—much less her husband—and that husband his father, whose heart, he knew, disdained a falshood, and whose amiableness of character was revered and acknowledged by all about him.

The shock which his feelings received may be easily conceived, though his father, in what he had written, he was satisfied, was the victim of false appearances, or some unaccountable mistake.

By the date of the letter, he found Belmont

Belmont must have been with Mrs. Somerton in the shrubbery, the very night after Alethea had been rescued from his lawless power. It was plain, therefore, that in making his escape from the cottage, he had proceeded direct for Somerton Lodge; and Osrick felt that he had done him injustice, in suspecting that he had been privy to the subsequent attempt that had been made on his life.

The more Osrick reflected upon the nature of what he had read, the more his ideas were bewildered in doubts—he had had convincing proofs of Belmont's being a villain—yet, in what his father advanced to criminate him, he could in nowise conceive that he had been guilty. He would now have sacrificed every thing but his honour to have been at the Lodge. His presence there, he knew, would cause the whole of the mysterious affair to be sifted to the bottom, and in which the acquittal of any fault that could tarnish the reputation of his youthful mother-in-law, he endeavoured

voured to persuade himself, was involved. This accomplished, his father, of course, would taste the blessings of mental ease again.

With an aching heart, and gloomy brow, he at length broke the seal of the other letter, and was not a little surprised at the

UNEXPECTED PROPOSALS

it conveyed to him. It was from the man whom he had overtaken on the road, while on his journey to join his regiment, who had promised to pay him a visit at Southampton, which promise, however, he had not observed—and contained the following words:—

"SIR,

"I have had leisure to turn over in my mind what passed between us, when you condescended to offer me a seat in your carriage as you were proceeding for Southampton,

Southampton, and the result is, that if you will be as liberal as you then promised, I will be as communicative as you then wished. I can account for many circumstances that have operated to surprise you—perhaps many more than you suspect—for I can throw a light upon several strange matters, in respect to which you are, and must, without my assistance, remain in the dark. Some momentous particulars, as affecting old Grassingly—the coppice—blunt Madge, and what you discovered in her residence—besides many other things of equal import, I am in possession of, and which I will reveal for a fair price, and a positive assurance from you, that my person shall be safe from every kind of molestation and danger, which you on your part can prevent. A letter directed to F. M. to be left at the post-office at Arundel, till called for, will certainly reach me. As I find your word of honour is as binding to you as your oath, I shall not hesitate to trust you, and to visit you when

when and where you may appoint to meet me, provided I approve of the contents of your letter—but remember our interview must not be witnessed by any third person whatever, so as to let him into the secret of any discoveries which I intend to make. By this caution I do not mean to insinuate that a meeting between us must take place in a wood, or any such secret place, for I have imbibed so favourable an opinion of your character, the result of my enquiries, that your word once passed not to betray me, I will attend you at an inn, or where else you choose; only let it be recollected, that a room, or place by ourselves, is one of my unchangeable stipulations. In expectation of soon receiving your answer,

I am, Sir,
Your humble servant,
F. M."

To Lieutenant Somerton,
—— Regt. of foot, Portsmouth."

The

The extraordinary contents of this epistle, for a time, detached Osrick's thoughts from the one preceding. He would willingly have complied with the greater part of the proposed terms for the interview, had he been on shore—but as it was, he could only regret that circumstances multiplied but to mortify and render him the more unhappy.

The latter letter he shewed to his friend Dreadnought, but not a syllable did he suffer to transpire respecting the former. Dreadnought smiled as he perused it; and having gone through it, observed, that it was certainly mortifying not to have the means of replying to it, as some singular events of his life might, in the end, thereby receive elucidation. It was his opinion, however, that until the other had satisfied him he had in nowise been instrumental to the murder which they suspected

suspected had been committed, the proposals contained in the letter could not be complied with; and in which opinion Osrick's perfectly coincided.

The fleet had now left the harbour; the wind was brisk and favourable; and, for the first time, Osrick found himself

AT SEA.

The nature of his situation now, for a time, engrossed his thoughts, and occasioned a pleasing survey of the many objects around him.

"The threaden sails,
Borne with the invisible and creeping wind,
Drew the huge bottoms through the furrow'd seas,
Breasting the lofty surge."

Osrick was delighted at the animated picture which the ocean at this time presented. The multitude of floating objects, appearing like another world, suddenly sprung

sprung up from the center of the deep, to hold a new place in the boundaries of creation. "The busy crews, their sails unbending," pacing the decks, or manning the shrouds and yards, seemed busily employed; while the British flags, waving high in air, silently but impressively denoted in what nation's interest they were engaged; and to what power only, save the great omnipotent spirit of the universe, they owed and observed obedience. The irradiating lamp of day, streaking the horizon with fire, and crimson and vermillion tints, edged, as it were, with liquid glittering silver, or polished sparkling steel, was fast declining in the west, and gave to the canvas which the breeze agitated and expanded, diversity of hues; while the divided waters, glistening in the retiring solar rays, as the floating castles majestically yielded to the influence of the gentle gale, dropped, like showers of pearl, in all directions, and, apparently, dissolved on what they fell.

The

The land, gradually declining from the sight, excited indescribable emotions of regret, for memory could but dwell on the endeared objects which were there contained—but here the contemplative soul also found relief, its sadness being ameliorated by hope, that even in this world they were destined to meet again.

Like a dark opaque cloud, its rugged extremities bordered with burnished gold, and varying in brilliancy, until their effulgence is totally lost in gloom, appeared and disappeared the cliffs of Albion; leaving, at length, only water and sky, and all between, for the eye to dwell on, and the speculative mind devoutly to contemplate and admire.

The wondering faculties of Osrick, from nature's works, turned to nature's God, and as

> "The glimmering dusk, involving earth and sky,
> Crept slow and solemn on,"

he

he felt the full force of the following beautifully expressive lines:—

"Devotion now,
With eye enraptur'd, as the kindling stars
Light, one by one, all Heaven into a glow
Of living fire, adores the hand divine,
Who form'd their orbs, and pour'd forth glory on them."

Osrick was on deck until an encroachment had been made on the following morning—the scene was new to him, and he felt no inclination to lose the sensations which it excited. It was a night when the waning moon gives

"A shuffled, sullen, and uncertain light,
That dances through the clouds, and shuts again;"

imperfectly and at intervals shedding a pale cast on all beneath.

The lights in the vessels twinkled around, studding the mantle of night with dim stars, that partially illuminated its darkest folds, as they kept continued motion

motion to the undulating and resistless commands of ocean.

The repetitions of the steersmen—the changes of the watch—the loud voices of the boatswains—the various shiftings of the sails as the wind veered—and the signal guns from the ships of war, to prevent the faster sailing vessels from getting too far ahead, were all deeply interesting to Osrick, and kept his attention awake.

For several days, though occasionally affected with sea-sickness, a circumstance common with young voyagers, Osrick took great pleasure in his situation—he almost wished he had been a sailor—nor did a threatening gale, to which the fleet was soon after exposed, induce any alteration in his sentiments.

In due time, and free from material injury, the whole of them reached

MONTE VIDEO,

where their debarkation, with all possible expedition, was effected.

This

This town is strongly situated on the eastern bank of the Rio de la Plata, about twenty leagues from its mouth, and fifty from Buenos Ayres, which stands on the western side of the same river.

The harbour of Monte Video is capacious and convenient; and the rocky fortress, well garrisoned, might almost be considered as impregnable.

A well planned and well conducted attack, however, under the command of the brave Sir Samuel Achmuty, and assisted by a squadron of frigates, had classed it in the number of British conquests, and given one laurel more to the hardy veterans of Albion.

Osrick and Dreadnought were among the first of the troops that were landed; and all were severally welcomed by the shouts of their countrymen, who had been some time there, expecting their arrival.

They had been on shore but a short time, when they were joined by Ensign Imbecile, pale and languid—he had been afflicted

afflicted with a dreadful sea-sickness, he told them, almost from the hour he had left England, which had so extremely enervated him, that he began to feel serious alarm for the consequences.

"A few hours rest," said Dreadnought, "will put you to rights, no doubt; therefore, get into quarters as soon as you can, and you'll be well enough by to-morrow."

"How long, Captain," enquired Imbecile, "do you suppose we shall remain in this singularly strange and uncomfortable place?"

"I hope but a few hours only," he replied; "for I long for the diversion at Buenos Ayres, as it will give us an opportunity of avenging the cause of our countrymen."

"And of releasing a brave fellow from captivity," said Osrick, (alluding to General Beresford, who had been a prisoner

there some little time), "and the warriors that were under his command."

"I hope I shall be well enough to accompany you," remarked Imbecile.

"I hope so too," sneeringly observed Dreadnought; "for it would be a cruel drawback on the service to be deprived of so *able* and *willing* a coadjutor."

Imbecile, not relishing the discourse, left them; and Osrick and Dreadnought soon after separated, to attend to their respective duties.

The bustle occasioned by the debarkation having somewhat subsided, Osrick, on the following day, amused his curiosity in examining the town, and entering into conversation with the natives, a large proportion of whom he found spoke English tolerably well.

The males, he perceived, were much addicted to smoking tobacco, but few of them being seen without segars in their mouths,

mouths, and almost all appeared of a naturally idle and slothful disposition.

The women, regardless of the number of foreign spectators, pursued their usual avocations and amusements; many, he observed, seated on stools just within their own houses, the doors being open, diverting themselves with singing, and playing on guitars and mandolines, a few producing, particularly on the former instrument, no very unpleasant accompaniment to the voice.

They appeared in nowise shy or coy; and though the military occasionally appeared to make amorous advances to them, they did not seem displeased with their freedoms; neither did their husbands or relatives betray any jealous fears or sudden resentments on the occasion.

The common people, including negroes and mulattoes, were curiously habited—the generality being enveloped in a kind of striped stuff cloak, or rather bag, called a

chony, the upper extremity of which just afforded room for the head to pass through, the skirts descending nearly to the ankles: loose full sleeves were added to the sides, for the arms to fall into with ease and freedom.

Busied in noticing the various objects he passed, and having no settled point of destination, Osrick, as evening approached, found himself at a considerable distance beyond the town; and the twinkling stars had began to appear in heaven's concave, ere he had bestowed a thought upon the propriety of turning back.

During his walk, he had refreshed himself with the fruits that, in many places, grew in the most luxuriant abundance. A kind of grape called *imbegue*, and the *pigna*, or Paraguay pine, were delicious; but the juicy durasno pleased him best. The trees which produced the latter were uncommonly numerous, and, excepting that their stems were of much greater girth and magnitude, strongly resembled that

that of the European peach-tree, as did the fruit the peach, which they produced."

Wild horses, in all the playful pride of native liberty, he had observed scampering over the plain at a distance: and, as the twilight set in, birds of various plumage hovered over his head, and by their screaming notes indicated to him, that he had intruded on their nocturnal haunts; while the tormandua, or ant-bear, just shewed his sharp nose, to disappear among the scattered leaves, and hide himself from observation.

The howlings of wild dogs being at length heard on either side of him, and a glimpse of a fierce jaguar, prowling for prey at a distance, obtained, Osrick began to feel himself not very secure from danger, and therefore turned himself about, for the purpose of retracing his steps to the town.

At this instant he heard a noise in the woody precincts to his left, and the mo-

ment after he beheld a man on horseback rushing from an avenue of the durasno trees, and furiously making towards him. He had assumed an attitude of hostility, and in his right hand he grasped a lance. Osrick had heard of the dangerous tribe of

THE INDIOS PAMPAS,

whose aim is plunder, and whose pursuits are but too often carried on in blood, and his surprised senses rightly told him he was one of them.

Happily the Lieutenant was not unarmed—he had a case of pistols in his belt, and a trusty sabre by his side. To avoid the miscreant was impossible, and to escape his weapon difficult. With a hideous yell, and spear uplifted, he now rapidly and daringly approached, his horse tearing up the earth in his speed, and snorting quick and dismally, as his ruthless rider urged him on.

Osrick,

Osrick, fully on his guard, took a deliberate aim at the ruffian, and at the moment when his uplifted weapon would have been darted at him, he discharged his pistol—then suddenly removed behind the trunk of a tree he had selected for that purpose.

The shot appeared to have taken effect; for the uplifted arm of the villain in an instant dropped, though he still retained the lance in his grasp; and his shrill yell was succeeded by a kind of deep guttural intonation, indicating agony and alarm.

The horse, however, dashed furiously on, and both were presently lost in the increasing gloom of night.

It is but seldom that the predaceous *Pampas* seek for spoil alone; and that others of the same infamous clan were in the neighbourhood, Osrick now began to be seriously apprehensive; and, to confirm his fears, a body of between ten and fifteen of them, probably aroused from their lurking-places by the report of the pistol,

he imagined he observed at a distance; and the trampling of horses he distinctly heard.

Fully alive to the growing

HORRORS

of his situation, he now inwardly reproached himself for his folly in wandering thus far alone—but that could afford him no relief, and every moment was big with danger.

Something, however, he felt was to be done, and the first thing that prudence whispered him to attend to, was that of removing from the spot where he had been so unexpectedly assailed; for, if not dangerously wounded, the assailant, supported by others, might return, when circumstances would put it out of his, Osrick's power to escape with life.

In his walk, the Lieutenant had pursued no regular track, so that he knew not his direct road back to the town, but guiding his

his steps in that way he conceived to be the right one, he at a brisk pace now proceeded, in the fervent hope of not being disappointed.

The evening, which had been fine, suddenly experienced an unpleasant change; tremendous clouds congregated and shut out the luminaries of heaven, while big globules of rain began to fall, which presently increased to a torrent, and the hoarse thunder threatened at a distance.

The howlings of dogs, the snortings of horses, the terrified lowings of wild oxen, with which the country abounded, the savage roarings of the furious beasts of prey, mingling with the screaming notes of the terrific condor, the most formidable of the vulture species, and hoarse croakings of others of the carnivorous feathered tribe, now floated in the dank atmosphere, giving nameless horrors to the night, and exciting fears in Osrick such as he had never felt before.

Though pelted by the rain, and annoyed by the sounds of ill portent,

he heard, it was his particular object to keep the locks of his pistols dry, and which he endeavoured to do by winding the folds of his military sash over them, while he walked with his sabre drawn, that he might defend himself in case of surprise.

The lightning's forked flashes were now, at intervals, emitted from the cumbrous clouds, streaming in all directions, or quivering above his head, making visible, for the instant, the space about him, and giving a deeper cast to the darkness that succeeded.

In one of those transitory intervals of light, Osrick found that he had wandered to a confused and huge mass of overhanging rocks, which defied his farther progress that way, excepting by a cave that appeared to wind its course beneath them, the entrance of which he had nearly gained.

Drenched by the falling torrents, any place that promised refuge from the tempest was desirable; he therefore endeavoured to gain the opening he had noticed, and

and which having done, he was preparing to enter the chasm, when the sudden bellowings of some aroused monster within suspended his design.

Shuddering with dread, he recoiled from the place, keeping his sabre extended—the only mode of defence that was left him, and of the insufficiency of which he was but too sensible.

Chilled with the damps, and horrid expectation, he now stood irresolute, unknowing which way to turn, or how to proceed with a probable chance of safety.

In this dread moment of suspense, another vivid glare from the clouds exhibited to his terrified gaze

A JAGUAR,

foaming with rage, and issuing from the rude opening in the rocks, which, just before, he had been on the point of entering.

Assisted by the same light which exposed its own fearful form to view, the beast discovered Osrick, and springing instantly at him, received the point of his extended weapon in its mouth, which deeply piercing, brought it to the ground.

The shock had also nearly occasioned Osrick to fall—it drove him many paces back, before he was enabled to recover his balance, and where he awaited in the horrible expectation of a second attack.

The animal, deeply wounded, bellowed hideously, until having again discovered its foe, by the same means as before, it made a second attempt to injure him.

In this instance, however, Osrick avoided its spring, and the next moment the monster was transfixed, by a spear from an unknown hand, and the shouts that succeeded the blow, evinced that the Pampas, in great numbers, were about the spot.

Osrick now thought his destruction inevitable. He had escaped from one peril

but

but to fall into another. The spear that had transfixed the jaguar might have been aimed at himself; and a second which now whizzed by him in the dark, slightly wounding him in the cheek, confirmed him in that opinion.

To avoid certain death, or rather to protract existence, for ultimately to escape he now considered as impossible, he rushed towards the mouth of

THE ROCKY CAVE,

stumbling over the bleeding body of the jaguar in his way, as it lay howling in the convulsed agonies of death.

The cave, however, he reached, and as his only, though terrible resource, he quickly entered it; expecting momentarily that another monster there concealed would open his reeking jaws to devour him.

The yells of the sanguinary Pampas without, and the clatter of their weapons about the rocks, urged Osrick forward—

death.

death by wild beasts in a cave, not being more appalling to him, than that of being hacked to pieces by monsters of the human race in any other quarter.

The width of the cave, the darkness would not permit him to ascertain; but a progress of about twenty paces, diverging to the left of its entrance, to avoid any missile weapons, that might have overtaken him in a straight direction, brought him to its extremity that way, and he could proceed no farther.

Yells dissonant and horrible still were continued from without; and he often imagined that the biped bloodhounds were about to enter the place to destroy him.

Loosing his sash from his pistols, he found them secure and dry, the damps not having penetrated to the locks, and taking one in his left hand, and grasping his sabre with the right, he resolved to sell his life as dearly as possible, and determinedly to defend himself to the last.

The paw of some living animal, at this moment,

moment, rested on his foot—he suddenly kicked it from him—but quickly returning, he felt its sharp teeth perforate his boot, and enter his leg, giving him pain indescribable. A well-directed blow of his sabre, however, released him from his unknown but terrible assailant. The animal, whatever it was, now sent forth moaning cries, scattering the loose earth about the cave, some of which alighted on Osrick, and making a strange kind of noise, as though expiring, and tugging and gasping for life.

That the wound he had inflicted had mortally wounded it, and caused the sounds of agony which met his ear, Osrick could easily conceive; and farther wounds he would have inflicted, had he but known where to strike—as it was, he was fearful of damaging his weapon against the hard protuberating rocks, and therefore repeated not the blow.

Groping with his sword, he now endeavoured to find an inlet, if any such there was,

was, that might let him still farther into the heart of the stony pile, moving slowly, and with extreme caution, lest another unknown enemy should be aroused to attack him.

No favourable interstice, however, could he find, no welcome disseveration presented itself to give hope to perseverance, or lull the growing horrors of the mind with the slightest expectation of eventual relief.

Finding his efforts baffled to the left, Osrick adventured to cross more to the right of the entrance of this den of terrors; in doing which, his sword struck against a large projecting fragment of rock, to the summit of which he essayed to climb, and which, by the many holes, large enough for the foot to enter, that he discovered about it, he easily effected, and, at length, found himself securely seated on a square surface of the projectment, at least ten or twelve feet from the base.

Raising himself upon his feet, for the purpose,

purpose, if possible, of ascending still higher, having previously returned his pistol to his belt, and the sword to the scabbard, he felt a cavity, about breast high, large enough to admit his body to pass, and to which he, without hesitation, committed himself.

This cleft, he fancied, from the smooth feel of its bottom, had been the effect of art, and led to some secret recesses in the pile, though of what description he was totally at a loss to conjecture.

The horrid yells and shouts, on the exterior of the place, becoming less loud, now induced him to suppose that the ruffians were retiring from the spot; and the warm hope that he could securely remain where he was until daylight, once more gladdened his senses, gave a throb of pleasure to his heart, such as he had never expected to feel again.

His pleasure, however, was but very short-lived—the confusion without, almost

most the moment after, increased to a greater pitch than before; and a powerful and continued stream of light found its way, by the entrance into the cave, and which gradually expanded, until it had illumined the whole of its gloomy interior.

Osrick, without losing time in examining the place he had ascended from, and which he had now an opportunity of doing, retreated farther into the cleft that had received him, until loosening a square fragment of stone, which impeded his way, from its hold, the thought struck him of placing it before the opening he had passed, and which he accordingly did, the stone thereby partially filling up the aperture, and promising to secure it from particular observation.

Thus situated, Osrick retained his position, while, between the openings of the adhesive rocks and the stone he had himself placed, he commanded a distinct view of the cave's entrance, about which the

the Pampas, with lighted torches, he soon perceived, had assembled.

One of the banditti, with a poised spear in his right hand, and a torch in his left, at length, with great caution, entered, scowling his haggard and glaring eyes around. Suddenly the wretch became agitated—his countenance assumed a more diabolical expression of ferocity; then darting his spear at some object he had discovered, with all the force he could command, he precipitately retreated to his ruthless brethren without.

Again their yells horribly predominated, and which were re-echoed back by the hollow sounding caverns that the rocks concealed; a circumstance that seemed to induce them to strain their throats the more, to augment the hellish uproar they occasioned.

Sounds more dreadfully appalling, the human heart cannot conceive, than were those which those monsters of rapine appeared to enjoy, and which filled Osrick's mind

mind with predictive dread, as he was compelled silently to listen to them.

The hideous howls, at length, dying away into indistinct murmurs, the same wretch of the savage race entered as before. With visible emotions of joy, he observed that his spear had pierced the object at which it had been aimed; when glancing his rolling globes of sight around, to ascertain what else the confined and dismally enclosed space contained, and discovering nought to rouse his fears, he uttered a screaming signal to his colleagues in rapine, who, like a mountain torrent agitated by the roaring tempest, rushed forward, rending the air with their howls, and presently filling all parts of the cave with their fear-inspiring presence.

Their torches, blazing brightly, illumined every inlet that from thence branched into the chaotic pile, enabling Osrick to observe, that the cleft in which he remained concealed, by a gradual and safe-

safe descent, extended to an immense distance, the extremity of which, being beyond the gleaming influence of the torches, numerous and glaring as they were, was obscured in gloom.

On a sudden, the greater part of the diabolical crew, as if recollecting a something necessary for them to attend to, that they had previously forgotten, hurried from the spot, leaving two only, with their torches, in the cave, to keep watch there in their absence.

In a few moments, however, another of the miscreants returned, dragging with him the lifeless body of the jaguar, and which he presently prepared to skin.

Osrick continued

A SILENT SPECTATOR

of what was passing, and, in fixing his eyes on the breathless animal, he also discovered a cub, with a spear still fastened in its body, and which at once disclosed

closed to him, by what he had been wounded in the leg, and what it was that had occupied the villain's attention he had at first observed approach.

The dam, for such he rightly supposed the grown jaguar to be, by some authors mentioned as a tiger, but more commonly distinguished as the puma, was of the largest description—of a bright brown colour, the back being marked with long black stripes, and the sides with oblong spots, black, with brown openings in the centre. The thighs and legs were also ornamented with black spots, but the belly and breast were white.

The skilful butcher was not long in stripping off the skin, which having effected, he threw it over his shoulders, damp and bloody, and reeking as it was, and secured it, with a slight cord, under his chin.

Before he could accomplish the same task with the cub, others of the Pampas returned, who, by their wild and eager looks,

looks, evinced that some dispute had taken place amongst themselves, for their incoherent jargon Osrick was at a loss to comprehend.

One, who appeared to be the leader of the hellish horde, stormed with all the maddened anger that

AN ENRAGED SAVAGE

could display, whilst another, to whom he particularly directed his furious attention, pointed to the slain monsters, and occasionally assumed an attitude of supplication.

Not being able, however, to appease the wrath of the other, who gnashed his teeth in anger, while his dark soul seemed big with some horrible design, he sank trembling on his knees, and implored for mercy.

Nothing moved by the humiliated demeanour of his victim, the sanguinary chief raised his arm, and with it a sharp-

edged

edged tomahawk, striking therewith so deadly a blow on the head of the wretched object, as to divide it down the center of the face, and scatter his smoaking brain about the sides of the black and frowning rocks.

Howls, lengthened and terrific, succeeded this bloody transaction, and Osrick, at first, imagined that the infernal group was proceeding to avenge their fallen associate in the death of his executioner; but in this he soon discovered his mistake, for the dusky chief, nothing daunted, authoritatively beckoned them to follow him, which they accordingly did, but not without looks of apprehension, each fearing it would be his turn next to fall beneath the tomahawk. The cave, therefore, was presently left to the dead jaguars, and the remains of the wretch who had so miserably perished; and all was again hid in the pitchy shades of night.

The clashing of their arms, and their loud yells, however, still announced the horde

horde to be about the exterior of the rocks, apparently in vigilant quest of something, or somebody; and Osrick, from his having been previously seen, and wounded with a spear, when the lightning exposed his form, could easily conceive, that that somebody for whom they were searching could be no other person than himself.

The storm, he imagined, had, in a great measure, subsided, as he no longer heard the thunder, neither did the rain rattle about the ruins—though it was not the contention of the elements he feared, for to the storm only he felt he was indebted for his life, which had screened him from lengthened observation, when beset with foes on all sides.

Secure as he providentially now found himself, the suspicion that the banditti, when disappointed of their prey without, would return to the cave, and discover his place of concealment, now haunted him, and, at length, so far wrought upon him,

that he determined to explore the secrets of

THE ROCKY AVENUE,

or cleft, beyond him, taking care to proceed with that deliberate caution which, in case of need, should enable him to make good a retreat.

Advancing slowly, and, at the same time, so cautiously, that a listener would scarcely have heard a foot fall, he continued to penetrate deeper into the ruins, the passage, in nearly a straight line, extending much beyond his expectations, and which becoming wider as he proceeded, he could at length, with ease, erect himself, whereas, for nearly an hundred paces from the commencement of his progress, he had been compelled to walk with his body bent.

The passage, at length, took a winding direction to his left, sometimes rather ascending, and then gradually declining, until

until he found it terminate, not by a door, but with stone, as though all was solid rock beyond, and farther progress impossible.

A moment's reflection, however, told him, as the passage was evidently the work of human hands, and not the effect of chance, that it must have been contrived for some particular purpose—and what purpose it could possibly answer, if that were its termination, was beyond his powers of divination. Therefore, that it had a communication with some place beyond, he was satisfied, though how to find the mystery that concealed it, was a difficulty he scarcely expected to surmount

Moving his hand lightly over the unwelcome barrier, in the hope of finding a something that should disclose the secret, his fingers entered a cavity, and he felt an iron spring, which forcibly pressing, a square stone, in a metal frame, which the other hand discovered, was gradually

pressed into a concealed groove on his right, in the end, opening a space, through which, by bending his body, he found he could, with the greatest facility, pass.

Having gently let himself through, he hesitated for a moment, and was rather at a loss to decide which was the most prudent, that of advancing, or retracing his way back, for the purpose of ascertaining if the Pampas had returned to the cave; but his astonishment was indescribable, when, on a sudden, he found that the stone had returned to its former position, and completely cut off his retreat.

Reason, however, having whispered to him, that the side on which he was must also have a connection with the hidden spring, (or where was its utility?) he was successful in searching for it, finding it nearly in an opposite direction, and in a similar cavity to the former, the stone receding into the groove when the spring

was

was pressed, and returning, by almost imperceptible degrees, when the hand was withdrawn.

Again assured that to retreat was within his power, after endeavouring to balance the consequences in his mind, he resolved that his exploration should not end there—his curiosity, in fact, had been so potently excited, that now it was not very easily to be subdued. At all risks, therefore, so long as there appeared a prospect of his doing it with tolerable safety, he determined to advance, as fate, or his own good or ill fortune, should direct.

Luckily for him, at the moment of his decision, a distant glimmering light shot towards him, and revealed to him the jeopardy of his situation, for it just made visible to him, that he was standing upon the extreme verge of a projecting point of the ruins, many feet from the earth beneath, from which one step more would have precipitated him.

He shuddered, and was piously thankful for the peril he had again escaped.

The stream of light, in apprizing him of his danger, also presented to his notice some rugged and uneven steps, which led to the parts below, and to which he now committed himself.

Finding himself, upon his quitting the steps, upon a smooth even platform, or pavement of marble, the continued glimmering partially enabled him to form some judgment of the place, though to discover the source of the light was his more predominating desire.

Huge rocks appeared to frown on all sides of him, assuming a variety of shapes, and forming the butments of arches, at irregular distances.

Fronting him, was a gothic archway, through which the luminous stream played that had so timely warned him of danger, and challenged his approach.

The entrance of this archway was furnished with

but which, however, standing open, presented no impediment to Osrick's passing.

The light, from the friendly service it had rendered him, he felt every inclination to pursue; and, therefore, slowly, and with his usual caution, he crossed towards it—took that as his guide, and went on.

He had proceeded, however, but a short distance on his new route, when he was startled by the sounds of footfalls. He paused—the sounds were repeated, and he unsheathed his sabre.

Some person, he now fancied, was rapidly approaching him, but no object could the eye discover. The suspense he endured was terrible. The sounds, at length, ceased; but, the moment after, the violent closing of the iron gate announced to him that he was

Again the noise of footsteps broke in upon the silence of the place—but the latter were receding sounds, and were presently lost in space.

Impressed with all the horrors of the most loathsome and threatening confinement, Osrick, in agony, contemplated his fate—but as despondency never did, and never will release a man from difficulties, and perseverance and courage almost invariably do something better for those who have recourse to them, he suddenly strove to overcome the former, and rely, with the hope of ultimate relief, on the latter.

That he was not the only person in the ruins, the light had previously manifested to him; and a proof of a more disagreeable complexion had likewise presented itself, in the unexpected closing of the gate.

The place might be the established resort and habitation of the Pampas; and yet

yet the cave, which had been converted into a den for quadruped savages, took from the feasibility of such a conclusion.

The cave certainly was at a great distance from the spot he had reached, and if the robbers occupied any part of the arched recesses, they certainly were ignorant of there being such a channel as he had passed through, that led to them, or it must have been one of the first places they would have examined, in their search for him, particularly as they had had every reason to suppose, from the sight they had obtained of him, that he had entered the cave to escape their fury.

To retreat, however, he now considered as impossible, and to remain where he was, promised to be attended with no salutary effect; therefore, still making the streaming light his guide, he once more proceeded in quest of discoveries.

This passage, which took rather a winding course, he traversed, the light gradually becoming stronger as he made progress, until at last he reached its source, and found himself in a kind of arched dome, from the centre of which, by a rusty chain, depended a dirty tripod lamp, one branch only ignited, and which darted its penetrating beams around.

This circular receptacle exhibited four gothic recesses, in each of which appeared a ponderous iron door, all closed, and rendered more secure by chains of immense strength and weight.

The floor was of black marble, partially hid by adhesive filth, on which were imprinted the visible marks of footsteps, intermixed with various shining streaks of blood, that could but convey portentous horrors to the beholder.

Huge pillars, seemingly cut out of the solid rock, supported the dome, in many

places displaying figures of singular forms, and of the most curious art and workmanship.

The ravages of the destructive hand of Time, however, were to be observed in all parts; and the green and yellow damps that had oozed through the pores of the rocks, had spread a slimy and noxious liquid over the surface of every object, and which, in many places, formed a creeping current that descended to the floor, there collecting and encrusting, and causing an effluvia to arise, disgusting and painful to the senses to encounter and endure.

Restless and uneasy in his mind, completely at a loss how to proceed, or which way to turn, with any probable chance of eventual succour, Osrick had halted, his eyes alternately resting upon the frowning and unseemly objects about him.

In this state of mental perplexity, and indescribably depressing uncertainty, a groan, loud and lengthened, pierced his ear,

and echo repeated it in the secret cavities about him.

He started—and nameless fears, in despite of himself, were taking firm possession of him, when the following words, which he distinctly heard, in an anguished female voice, gave a different turn to his surprise, and new ideas to thought.

"Heavenly Powers! in thee I put my trust—Guard, oh guard me from the dark and horrid purposes of mine enemies! and oh! send some ministering angel to save me from dishonour, and release me from the miseries of confinement."

That some unfortunate female was there a prisoner, the words she had uttered made evident, and he might be the instrument, in the hands of Heaven, to whom her anguished and pathetic oraison had been addressed, to release her from captivity—though how that was to be effected, considering himself as being but little short of a prisoner also, he had yet to learn.

Waving

Waving every other matter, however, his principal aim now was to discover where the supplicating woman was concealed; and advancing to one of the iron doors for that purpose, from which direction he had fancied the sounds issued, he presently succeeded in disencumbering it of the ponderous chains, when it instantly, but dismally creaking upon its rust-corroded hinges, yielded to his pressure, discovering to him a narrow gloomy passage, the extremity of which was guarded by another door, and to which the gleams of the lamp just reached.

A chilling vapour, dank and horribly offensive, curled about him, as silently he advanced to the door in question, and which, he found, was not secured, a very moderate exertion enabling him to open it.

But the sensation of horror that rived his heart, and froze the crimson current that circled in his veins and supported life, is not to be described, when his eyes rested

rested on the soul-appalling scene which the opening of the door disclosed to him.

The gleams of the lamp just made visible a few descending steps smeared with blood, and the putrifying bodies of human creatures indistinctly beyond them —it seemed

THE CAVERN OF DEATH!

In the midst of the terrific heaps of perishing remains which it exhibited, a tall figure stood erect—his face deeply gashed, and in many places bared to the bone. A lambent flame glistened in the sockets which had once contained the orbs of sight. The mouth was wide extended, the tongue, black and swelled to a prodigious size, hanging out, and resting with the chin upon the breast. The ribs, partially stripped of the flesh that had covered them, were prominently conspicuous, between which, in the body's interior, could just be perceived a dormant

mant fire, as slowly consuming the intestines, and silently and smokeless aiding the progress of devastation ! !

With an exclamation of the acutest dread, Osrick recoiled from the fearful spectacle. Trembling universally, by a retrograde motion, he regained the iron door, which, in the bewildering anguish of the moment, he suddenly closed, replacing the chains about it for security, as if apprehensive that the ghastly figure he had seen would, otherwise, have stalked forth, once more to horrify and confound him !

In this dreadful moment, when the faculties were under the enervating influence of excited fears and horrible expectations, the iron door he had closed was shaken violently in its frame—the chains, which, in his perturbation, he had but loosely and injudiciously fixed, with a soul-subduing crash, fell to the marble pavement; and the door, the instant after, with

with a tremendous noise, by an unseen power, was opened.

Osrick had sunk on one knee, his eyes directed towards the menacing aperture, when he observed, not the phantom, for such he could but suppose it was that had chilled his blood and given fear the ascendancy of resolution, but that which was nearly as frightfully appalling.

A lank figure, of a sooty hue, almost naked, his black locks dripping with gore, a stream of blood issuing from a gaping wound in his side, his features hideously scarified and distorted, and one of his eyes depending from the bleeding socket on his cheek, came fearfully and rapidly forward!

From the open door, the figure crossed to the arched entrance of the dome, his arms being advanced, as though in the act of catching at something, whilst hollow guttural sounds escaped him, dismally disturbing the silence of the night, and

and adding to the terrors that predominated.

A heavy peal of thunder, as he disappeared, deeply and firmly fixed as they were in the bowels of the earth, made the ruins to totter; and the wind, gushing through the dark and yawning avenues, extinguished the light.

Osrick was too overpowered at the instant to notice what had happened—cold drops of agony stood on his quivering flesh, a heavy oppressive feel was at his heart, and he gasped for breath.

The surprise of horror that had seized him, beginning, at length, to evaporate, reason exerted her powers to subdue his apprehensions, and he felt ashamed of the pusillanimity of his conduct.

Shaking off his fears, therefore, almost entirely, he was himself again.

If it pleased the omnipotent Arbiter of his fate that he should there fall, he had now the pious resolution to submit to the decree—his soul, he well knew, could not

be

be affected by such a circumstance, nor would the eternal blessings promised to the just be the more beyond its reach.

He reasoned like a Christian, and christian fortitude was the result.

Avoiding the passage, however, that led to the receptacle of horrors, he groped his way in the dark, until another faint glimmering caught his attention. It brought him to a niche in the dome-surmounted apartment which he had not previously discovered, from which, also, extended a narrow damp passage, but in an uneven and zig-zag direction, which the course he took in it soon after made known.

Tracing the light, he, in the end, found it was emitted through a chink of a door, situated in a square recess to his right, and opposite to which he halted in a listening attitude, when a deep-drawn sigh evinced that some wretched object was near to him.

He felt a strong desire, at the instant, to

to utter a few enquiring words, to ascertain from whence and from whom the sigh proceeded—but reflection, the instant after, telling him, that dangerous consequences might result therefrom, he, more prudently, continued mute, anxiously listening for other sounds to influence and direct his actions.

A short interval of suspense succeeded, when, in the same voice that he had before heard, was pronounced the following plaint of despondency:—

"Alas! ill-fated

"OLIRA,

"wretched victim of treachery, almost from thy cradle; trampled on and oppressed by those who should have supported and watched thy growing years; when will thy sufferings have an end! Each new day brings to thee but increase of woes—horrors more direful than even those with which already thou hast been afflicted,

afflicted, momentarily arise, to overwhelm and sink thy perturbed spirits in the dark eddy of despair! Oh! great Eternal, and Creator of the world, and all therein, reject not the prayer of thy supplicant, who putteth her trust in thee! assured that thou, and thou only, hast the power to give rest to her troubled heart, and, like vapours receding from the sudden and dazzling light of the sun, to brighten the misty horizon of her hopes, and bless her with returning cheerfulness, tranquillity, freedom, gratitude, and joy!"

That he was at the door of the cell that contained the hapless prisoner, Osrick was now convinced; and by the welcome light that glimmered through the time-effected chink, he was enabled to discover a massy bolt, that entered the rock and secured the door without, and which he, with as little noise as possible, drew back.

The door, luckily, possessed no other fastening—that, therefore, removed, it opened

opened to the slightest pressure on his hand.

The cell to which it led was of no very great dimensions—in the center of which stood a small table, and seated on a stool by its side, her head resting on one of her hands, was a female, neatly attired, and of a figure the most interesting.

So cautiously had the door of the cell been opened, that she heard it not; so that Osrick, as he slowly entered, had an opportunity of contemplating the object before him, her face being rather averted, for some time before he was himself perceived.

Her auburn tresses fell in negligent disorder, waving in shining ringlets on her shoulder. Her fine arched eyebrows were just visible above her hand, on which, as her head reclined, an arm was exposed, of such transcendent beauty, that the most skilful sculptor must have gazed at it with an admiration excited by the

the specimen it afforded of the superiority of Nature's works over the most exquisite productions of art.

Her head-dress was simple, a something in the Turkish style, her flowing ringlets loosely falling through the folds of a turban. A thin gauze covered her bosom, but that part of the neck which was seen above it, was of the finest form, and might have vied with the down of the swan in whiteness.

A loose vestment of pale blue chambray muslin, with but few ornaments, the whole indescribably elegant, though simple, completed the outline of her attire, apparently enveloping one of the most lovely and interesting figures in creation.

On the table near her was a small oval lamp, which, dimly burning, diffused a sickly glare around, and in one part of the cell making visible an opening to a second, which, from some scattered fragments of straw that were about it, seemed appropriated for the hours of rest, when

when tired nature should need, and seek repose.

The walls of the place were of a sombre hue, the collected mucilage of years glistening on them; and not an inlet could be perceived for the beams of day to penetrate or sweeten with its zephyrs.

A sudden change in the position of the interesting captive, at length, gave her a view of Osrick. She started—terror was deeply imprinted on her features—but which, as she fixed her eyes on the tall, manly figure before her, in the scarlet livery of honour, and of England, gradually softened into the lineaments of a surprise much less painful to be borne.

If Osrick had been struck with the singular beauties of her shape while seated, the commanding elegance of her air, the symmetry of her form, which an erect attitude now more forcibly displayed, and a face in which every feminine beauty vied for preeminence, the sensation he had

had experienced was, in a trifold degree, increased. To his astonished gaze, she appeared superhuman—an angel descended from the realms of eternal bliss, to irradiate that part of the terrestrial globe with her presence, he imagined, at the moment, could scarcely have assumed a more celestial appearance, and against the captivating effects of which, a heart guarded only by a deep-rooted prior attachment, was safe.

Her looks denoted her not to be more than eighteen years of age, though her stature was rather above the common size. Her features were Grecian, acquiring almost irresistible expression from the lustre of the finest dark eyes that can be imagined; and though her cheeks appeared to have been robbed of the blushing hue of the pink by mental sufferings, the delicate paleness of the lily that had succeeded, had deprived the countenance of nothing of its fascinations.

"Who

"Who are you?" she at length exclaimed, first breaking silence—"and what have I to hope or fear from a visit so unexpected?"

"Be not alarmed, fair lady," said Osrick; "my being here is solely the effect of accident—but should that accident empower me to render you the slightest service, I shall ever consider it as one of the happiest circumstances of my life."

In few words, Osrick informed her of as much of what had happened to him, as he conceived it requisite for her to know; concluding the brief narrative with repeating the strong desire he felt, even at the risk and expence of his life, of rendering her assistance, and of rescuing her from the miseries of confinement.

Osrick's manner at once inspired confidence; there was an honest openness in it, that could not be mistaken; and Honour had so indelibly imprinted her seal on his

brow, that an observer, at once, conceived the genuine amiableness of his character, which invited trust, unmixed with any suspicion of being deceived.

The explicit account he had given of himself, also demanded a corresponding return; nor did his lovely auditor betray the slightest disinclination to offer it. Her name, she said, was Clara, that she was of English parentage, though the particulars of her sad story she declined entering into, for reasons she had not then time to explain.

The vessel in which she had quitted England, accompanied by an uncle, (her parents having both paid the debt of nature,) had put into Buenos Ayres, while the British forces, under the command of General Beresford, had held possession of the town, and where it had been her uncle's intention to pass the remainder of his days.

The growing turbulence of the inhabitants, however, and the resolute determination

mination which they manifested of retaking the place from their conquerors, at length arriving at such an alarming height, her uncle, with a male and female attendant, had recrossed the river Plata, for the purpose of reaching Monte Video, and there fixing their abode, until circumstances should be more favourable to their sojourning at Buenos Ayres.

Tolerably accommodated, and guarded in a caravan, they were proceeding on their journey, about three-fourths of which they had accomplished, when they were suddenly attacked by an immense body of the Indian Pampas, some on horseback and some on foot, armed with tomahawks, scalping-knives, bludgeons, and spears.

Resistance was ineffectual, and those who were not destroyed, were plundered and made prisoners.

Her uncle, a very old man, she feared had lost his life, as she saw him fall pierced by a spear, since which her situation

tuation had been such, as had prevented her gaining any information of him, or the poor girl her attendant, or, in fact, of anything that might ease her mind to know.

More dead than alive, one of the fiercest of the Indians had placed her before him on a wild horse, and had proceeded with her, with incredible swiftness, until he had arrived at what to her appeared the ruins of some tower or castle, beneath which, by a subterraneous passage, having removed her from the horse, he compelled her to proceed with him, conducting her through various intricate archways, by the light of a torch, followed by others of the dusky tribe, until he had brought her to the gloomy cell in which Osrick had found her.

Having arrived there, he left her, closing and securing the door after him; and she was soon after visited by a female of the terrific clan, of the most squalid and disgusting aspect.

From

From her she learned, as well as she could contrive to make herself understood in disjointed sentences of English, that their chief had fallen in love with her; that she might think herself a very fortunate creature, as he meant to reserve her solely for himself; and that the moment he returned from an expedition he was engaged in with the horde, she might expect to see him.

Shuddering with horror, she had listened to the discourse of the black hag, though the assurance that she gave her that the monster she had captivated, and who was not the same that had conveyed her thither, would be absent for many days, somewhat restored her scattered spirits.

He might be slain, and never return, she endeavour to persuade herself; or she might effect her escape, if he survived to return, before such a horrid calamity happened.

She had entreated of the female fiend

to be made acquainted with the fate of her uncle and attendants, but could gain no satisfactory information. The men, she told her, she believed had been all slain and scalped, and the woman too, for aught she knew; and such might have been her case, had not their warlike chief taken a fancy to her; though, for her part, she wondered how one of his daring spirit and courage could at all be taken with such a flimsy squaw.

Alarmed at her rude and indelicate manner, she was glad, in the end, to see her depart—though she soon after returned, bringing food, though the only part of it that hunger ultimately compelled her to partake of consisted of some brown bread and fruits; and upon similar viands, with clear water, she had since subsisted.

Until the fourth day of her captivity, she had seen no person but her disgusting female attendant, who had regularly supplied her with food, and as regularly offended

offended her eyes with the vulgarity of her manner, and her ears with the extreme indelicacy of her words.

Soon after her forbidding attendant had left her, on the fourth day, the door of her dungeon was opened by a wretch, whom she instantly recognized to have been her conductor from the caravan to the ruins—he grinned hideously as he saw he was observed, and, by gestures uncouth and alarming, endeavoured to make known to her the passion with which she had inspired him.

Her terror had been excessive, but the other, probably mistaking the emotions he beheld, as, by words, it was impossible for them to understand each other, had suddenly advanced towards her, and seizing, had attempted to drag her to his arms.

A violent scream, however, had arrested his purpose, and he left the cell, as if apprehensive of being discovered there by some persons whom he feared, but not

without casting menacing looks at her for the disappointment he had met with.

On being revisited by the female, she told her of what had happened in her absence, who also grinned in her face, and scrupled not to tell her, that Quisembo had visited the cell at her connivance—he was their second in command, she said; and having likewise been much taken with her person, she had yielded to his entreaties, and permitted him to see her in the absence of the chief. The fear, however, of incurring the displeasure of his superior, she added, had induced him to retire, when he found her averse to admit his freedoms; though he consoled himself with the idea, that she would be turned over to him, when the chief had done with her, prior to her being left to the disposal of the clan.

The effect which such discourse had upon her, may be better conceived than expressed—the most gloomy and depressing fears found admission to her breast

breast—and she momentarily petitioned Heaven for relief.

Her desponding looks and drooping frame had only operated to raise the spirits of her female foe, and occasioned the most indecent and opprobrious words to be levelled at herself.

Her confinement had been lengthened to several weeks, and still the object for whom she had been expressly reserved had not made his appearance; neither had the monster, who had once so dreadfully alarmed her, again troubled her; nor had any thing occurred that could, for an instant, inspire her with the hope of escaping.

Her fate, however, she said, appeared fast drawing towards its close, as no longer ago than that morning, her demoniac, but watchful guardian, told her, that the chief was momentarily expected, and that at night, at farthest, she would have the felicity of reposing in his arms. "Make the most of the precious time with him,"

remarked the infamous wretch, "for it will not be long before he will get tired of you, and then you'll be turned over to Quisembo, who, in my opinion, is the properest fellow of the two."

Her distress, therefore, since the morning, had been past expression; and she had come to the horrid resolution not to survive the loss of honour, though her soul shuddered as her ideas dwelt on the crime of suicide.

"I have endeavoured to persuade myself," said she, as she closed her narrative, "though I am afraid I have not succeeded in the attempt, that the all-good and all-merciful Deity, who formed and gave life to the world, will not be angry with his creature, who rushes unbidden into his presence, to avoid the operations of crimes she had no other means of flying from. Heavenly Father, inspire me with fortitude! and oh! pardon the deed, which, to avoid the snares of infamy, I may have the virtuous courage to execute!"

Osrick

Osrick had listened to her tale in silence, but it had excited the most poignant interest in his breast, and her anguished manner had raised the beads of sympathy in his eyes. Perhaps his feelings had been more painfully alive to what he heard, in finding the lovely object he was listening to was an Englishwoman, and whose angelic countenance, moistened by her fast-flowing tears, was turned towards her countryman, in the hope of being, by his means, relieved from the misery that oppressed her, though circumstances seemed to have placed it beyond his ability to afford that succour, which otherwise every throb of his heart would have prompted him to offer.

He trembled, however, at the import and energy of her concluding words, and the heinousness of the crime of suicide, he failed not to impress upon her mind. In language so forcible and convincing did Osrick express his sentiments on the subject, that she was awed and alarmed;

and in the violence of those emotions which the conviction of her error caused, she respired a prayer of thanks to Heaven, that she had been spared the commission of such a horrible offence.

At this juncture a noise was heard without—the fair sufferer waved her hand for Osrick to retire to the inner cell, and with which silent request, as it promised to afford him more safe and deliberate means of protecting her, he instantly complied.

He had scarcely withdrawn, when the door of the outer prison, which had been on the jar, was dashed open with some little violence, and the same figure which, in the cave, he had supposed the chief, and who had there destroyed one of his fellows, Osrick beheld advance.

A grin of triumph distorted his features as he entered, with which, however, was blended the traits of surprise, at having found the door unbolted. The latter symptoms soon evaporated, and uttering a jargon

a jargon that was not to be understood, the brutal intent that had brought him thither became evident.

Extending his muscular and terrific arms, he would have seized his victim, but shrinking from his hideous grasp, with a piercing shriek, she darted into the inner cell to Osrick.

Grinning horribly, and gnashing his teeth with wild desire, and the imagined certainty that his object could not possibly escape him, he quickly pursued her, little dreaming of

THE CATASTROPHE,

that, in this world, was to close his iniquities for ever.

Unsuspecting of danger, he was rushing into the inner apartment, when Osrick met him at the entrance, and, with a desperate and determined thrust, his sabre, to the hilt, penetrated the miscreant's body, and backwards hurled him to the earth.

The

The fall was tremendous—not a groan however escaped him—the death rattles were in his throat, and in an instant he breathed no more.

The crimson flood gushing from the wound, ensanguined the dark marble pavement on which the inanimate body rested, sending up a reeky vapour, as it gradually lost the warmth of life, depressingly dismal to behold.

Turning to the lovely captive, Osrick found her almost bereft of sense—but his words speedily revived her; and to an enquiry, if she possessed strength and courage with him to attempt to escape from her loathsome prison, she quickly answered in the affirmative, and begged to know how such an attempt, with any probable chance of success, was to be made.

If they could but reach the avenue, he said, that led to the cave, he should not entertain a doubt of their safety, as the inhabitants of the ruins, who, he had been

but

but too fatally convinced, were the ferocious Pampas, he was satisfied were ignorant of there being such a secret channel to the exterior of the pile, or through it they would previously have pursued him; and the iron gate which had been closed upon him in his progress from that channel, might have been reopened by the monster who had paid the price of his villainy and fallen beneath his sword, in his way to the cell in which he then was breathless and extended.

The feasibility of escaping by such a route forcibly struck his fair auditor, and a ray of hope found its way to her heart.

"In the name of Heaven," she exclaimed, "let us begone! a moment's delay may be dangerous—and, indeed, I am quite well, and resolute enough to follow you."

The necessity of taking the light with him, did not escape his recollection; Osrick, therefore, possessing himself of the lamp, and grasping a pistol in his right hand,

hand, bade his lovely charge to follow him.

With all possible care, making but as little noise as possible, they reached the arched dome—the iron door, which led to the scene of horrors he had witnessed, he perceived was still open. His blood chilled as his eyes turned that way—but repressing his emotions, he whispered his angelic follower to keep close to him, which advice she pursued; and he began to cross for the open entrance, which he knew led to the iron gate.

At this fearful moment,

A PHANTOM,

the same ghastly, lank, black figure, almost naked, with gory locks, the blood issuing from his side, and one of the balls of sight depending from the bleeding socket, and resting on his scarified cheek, he had previously beheld, and from the very opening by which the apparition had formerly disappeared, and

for

for which they were making, accompanied with the same appalling sounds that seemed to issue from his throat, stalked into the place!!'

Osrick involuntarily drew back, and Clara, with a convulsed shriek, dropped lifeless on the marble floor.

In an instant, Osrick raised the horror-struck beauty in his arms; the figure, in the interim, moving for the open door, from whence he had originally issued, hid himself from observation.

Osrick was bewildered, and knew not how to act. It was an instant of agony not to be described. To remain where he was, promised nought but danger, and he might still pursue the road for the cleft he sought.

Supporting his lifeless burthen, therefore, as carefully as possible, he again moved for the opening opposite to him, when, terrible to relate, he saw the space now occupied by one of the ruthless Indian robbers, who, with uplifted tomahawk,

tomahawk, was preparing to lay him low.

Again he recoiled—the villain fearlessly advanced—Osrick discharged his pistol—the confined explosion equalled in noise the report of a cannon—his furious assailant dropped, uttering howls, ear-piercing and appalling, and which echo sent back in all directions.

Again Osrick hurried forward with his lifeless burthen—but a crowd, some bearing torches, of the sooty bloodhounds, met him in the arched passage, a female fury suddenly tearing the ill-starred Clara from his arms, and bearing her away, while some of the men endeavoured to seize on him, and others to dispatch him with their tomahawks. The

CONFUSION

now was general, and death appeared to float in every sound.

Osrick happily avoiding the blows that were

were aimed at him, with a slight cut only on his temple, and disentangling himself from others of the horde, succeeded in drawing another pistol from his belt, and firing it at random, another of the ruffians dropped, and the surprise of the moment occasioned the whole of them precipitately to retreat in the greatest terror and consternation.

In their haste, numbers fell—the torches were trampled under feet and extinguished—and Osrick, profiting by their dismay, followed close at their heels, until reaching the iron gate, by which all of them passed, he succeeded in gaining the rugged steps that led to the secret channel of the cave.

Gasping for breath, he had found the cavity which contained the spring, but in his exhausted state he wanted the strength to give it the proper pressure, and destruction again appeared inevitable.

The miscreants, recovering from the disorder into which they had so unexpectedly

pectedly been thrown, now procured fresh lights, betraying their disappointed rage by their yells, and, in greater numbers, proceeded for the dome, which they had so suddenly fled from.

By the glare of a torch, the deep shadow of Osrick's figure, at length, was espied by one of them—the howling signal he gave soon made his discovery known; and his confederates in blood, changing their route, presently returned to his assistance.

At this eventful crisis, Osrick acquired additional energy from the terrors that beset him—the spring yielded to his pressure—the sliding stone receded into the groove—he let himself through the opening, and which had again closed ere the villains could have an opportunity of discovering by what means he had eluded their pursuit.

Faint and weary, far from considering himself secure, or rather scarcely thinking of any thing, he now reclined at length upon

upon the rocky base of the cleft that had so seasonably received him, and endeavoured to recruit his declining powers.

The dreadful yells of the banditti, however, presently aroused him from the kind of stupor that had seized him, and the rattling of their arms on the trifling division of rock that now separated him from them, soon after conveyed the most menacing sounds to his ears.

Digging the point of his sword into the hard surface of the sliding stone, and resting the hilt of the weapon on his arm, above the elbow joint, to prevent the motion of the stone, should the spring be prest, he continued, for some little time, in the most fearful state of suspense—the yells of his enemies, however, at last, gradually died away, until he no longer heard them; and he then enjoyed the soul-reviving hope that his concealment had again escaped discovery.

Yet, as he certainly had been seen at the entrance of the cleft by one of the

infernal crew, how they should miss such a discovery was to him most extraordinary; for though, with his sword, he might have checked, or totally prevented the influence of the spring on the sliding stone, yet the stone itself might have been demolished by their tomahawks, and the improbable chance of escaping by an immediate flight through the cave, thereby only have been left for him.

It was evident, however, from whatever cause it proceeded, that, for that time, he was safe; and his prayer of gratitude, as his astonished faculties dwelt on the circumstance, found its way to Heaven.

The dismal fate of the wretched Clara now occupied his mind, and moistened his eyes with tears of the bitterest anguish and regret. That he, in his unsupported state, could free her from her inhuman persecutors, was impossible—but could he regain Monte Video, he might return to the ruins with a powerful detachment of British troops, and not only relieve the fair

fair object from the perils with which she was threatened, but also make prisoners of the ruthless horde, and consign them to such punishments as their crimes deserved.

Elate with this idea, he now moved onward for the cave, ruminating on what had happened—the adventures of the night once related to the British commander, he was well satisfied, would instantly operate to obtain for him permission to employ any part of the force he might pronounce necessary, to rescue suffering worth from misery, and punish the wilful turpitude of the vilest and most abandoned wretches of the human race.

Progressively pacing the whole length of the avenue, Osrick, at last, reached the extremity that communicated with the cave, and a sudden thrill of joy shot through him, when he saw, for the beams of morning made it visible, the square stone which he had himself placed at its entrance,

trance, in the same position he had left it; as a more consolatory convincement that the rocky channel which had preserved his life, had, at all points, escaped the notice of his foes, could not have been afforded him.

Moving the fragment on one side, he now took a cautious survey of the cave, when

A HORRIBLE SPECTACLE

which it exhibited, made his soul shudder, and the blood to curdle at his heart!

A male jaguar, he perceived, was greedily feeding upon the mangled remains of the robber he had seen a few hours before deprived of life by his sanguinary leader, and who had since met the reward of his crimes.

The voracious animal had already devoured much of the upper parts of the body—had torn out the entrails, and scattered fragments dark and bloody, around

around him, while his ravenous jaws, dyed with gore, continued to masticate, with eager and ferocious appetite, what the wild rage of a human monster had previously prepared by slaying for him.

The carcases of the dam and her cub, the former only skinless, lay, disregarded, to his right and left.

Osrick had yet one pistol loaded in his belt—he drew it forth—but would not the explosion bring the Pampas to the spot?—It was dangerous to try the experiment, and he became irresolute how to act.

The reviving rays of the morning sun invited him to quit the cave, and hasten for Monte Video; and the banditti, reason told him, would be extremely cautious how they publicly exhibited themselves in the blaze of day.

But how was he to quit the cave, while the grim and gluttonous quadruped remained there? and to wait until he had finished his hideous and offensive repast,

promised no relief; for when satiated, and the desire to roam was taken from him by a full stomach, it was not likely that he would retire, but rather that he would torpidly continue where he was.

Nearly an hour had elapsed before Osrick could determine upon any mode of procedure, the grim tyrant below being still busily employed, when, at all risks and consequences, he resolved to attack him.

Striking his sabre, therefore, against the rocks, he presently obtained the jaguar's notice, and, as Osrick had hoped he would, he endeavoured to climb the protuberances to reach him.

Osrick, in the interim, drawing himself back, had replaced the stone in the opening he had occupied, to avoid the effects of a visit too abrupt, an aperture large enough for the muzzle of a pistol to pass through, being still left.

The offended beast, at length, having scaled the rocks, thrust his snout into the interstice

interstice Osrick had formed, snorting and snuffing the air, and sending forth howling tones, on finding the impediment to the object he sought; but, the next moment, the pistol, within an inch of his head, was discharged, and he dropped lifeless to the earth, with a bullet in his brain.

The echoed and re-echoed explosion made Osrick tremble, and he awaited the result with anxiety and fearful expectations.

To his great relief, every thing continued tranquil; and, though not until after the lapse of nearly another hour, he adventured to descend. Reaching the bottom of the cave, he rapidly crossed to the mouth of it, to avoid gazing at the loathsome, mutilated objects it contained, and where his sight was blessed with the heavenly appearance of as bright a morning as he had ever beheld, while the plain, in perspective, exhibited to him a large party of individuals, the greater por-

portion of them seated round a blazing fire, apparently either waiting for, or partaking of their morning's repast.

Osrick had heard of

THE GUADERIOS

of South America, and his own good sense told him, that the group in the distance was made up of persons of that itinerant, but gay and harmless tribe; and to confirm his opinion, he imagined, soon after, that he could perceive their musical appendages, principally guitars, dangling loosely by their sides.

Rushing from the cave, he now committed himself to his fate, making the best of his speed, and travelling for nearly a mile, before he risked slackening his pace, by turning his head, to observe if he were pursued, when, to his inexpressible joy, he found he was not.

The ruins were now partially hid from him by intervening groves of trees, through

through wide openings of which he had passed, and were also rendered the more obscure by their being seated in a hollow part of the extensive plain, what could be discerned of them appearing like a confused heap of rocks only, beneath which, no observator, not in the secret, could, for an instant, suppose that a human being existed.

Osrick, however, particularly noticed the situation of the dreadful pile, and the scenery of nature about him, making himself secure of finding the place again, free from unnecessary difficulty and perseverance.

Completely at a loss which way to proceed as the nearest route for Monte Video, he kept the group of the itinerant Guaderios in his eye, and soon after was within a few paces of their circle.

He now discovered, that the fire which they surrounded had been kindled to roast an ox or a cow, which they had succeeded in entangling and slaying, and

which, from their great plenty, they, at almost all times, could accomplish with but very little difficulty.

The sight, however, was far from a grateful one to Osrick, though they had taken off the skin, and cleansed the carcase tolerably well, first stripping it of the loose fat, and then cramming it into the belly, to moisten or baste it in its progress of roasting or broiling.

Much of this proceeding he had an opportunity of observing before he came up with them, and so busily were they engaged about their work, that they scarcely noticed him until a very near approach.

They then regarded him with evident symptoms of surprise, when Osrick, taking his purse from his pocket, offered them several pieces of silver to put him in the right road for Monte Video, observing, that having taken an early walk to look at the country, he had unfortunately wandered from the regular track, and lost his way.

The

The silver they took with great eagerness, and several of them, who understood his language, readily promised the assistance he needed.

The blood which had trickled from the slight wounds on his temple and cheek, attracting their notice, he attributed to an accident he had met with in his hurry to recover the road he had lost, when his foot slipping, he had fallen on a projecting stone that had inflicted the injury, not conceiving that a deviation from the truth, in that instance, to be a very violent outrage committed on his moral duties.

The returning of his purse to his pocket, he imagined they regarded with an anxious significance that boded him no good; for though their occupation was not plunder, temptation might still excite them, he thought, to be dishonest.

Again, therefore, producing the purse, he emptied it of its contents, the greater part of which he presented to them, when

they appeared highly satisfied with his liberality, some of them striking up lively airs on their guitars, whilst others invited him to partake of a beverage, which they called *chica*, consisting of water in which *maize* seed had been steeped, and which they appeared to consider as a very great luxury.

Bread of *maize*, and the *manioc* and *yuca* roots, were also offered to him, all of which he refused; neither was a kind of tea, made by pouring hot water upon an herb, in a rudely-formed vessel, or calabash, furnished with a glass tube to suck the liquor through, more inviting to his taste.

One of them having, at length, agreed to accompany him a moderate distance, and put him into a track that would conduct him to Monte Video, he left the cheerful throng, and moved off with his new companion.

The appearance of his guide, however, Osrick did not altogether approve of—

there

there was a kind of subtleness in his manner, and a designing cast or leer with his eyes, that he thought rather denoted

TREACHERY,

than any sincere desire to serve him.

The Guaderios, he knew, subsisted on what they could collect in rambling from place to place, and playing on their guitars—but little serving to satisfy them, in a country where they could, almost at all times, procure beef for the trouble of catching, killing, and dressing it; and where the climate was so mild, that a moderate proportion of clothing only was requisite; and in which latter particular they appeared to take no pride, and to wear but as little as they could avoid to encumber them.

The females of England appear to approve of the costume of the Guaderios of Monte Video and adjoining country—that is, so far as regards the

scantiness of the materials which compose it, and occasionally imitate it on themselves, at the expence of the sex's best ornament, modesty, and the prudent rules which decency prescribes.

Widely different, however, Osrick knew were the habits and pursuits of the Pampas; and the latter, he was well aware, had their infamous spies planted in all quarters; and that his guide, under the hypocritical character he had assumed, was one of their detested minions, he began to be seriously apprehensive.

To confirm his suspicions, after a walk of about two English miles, from rather an elevated spot, and through an opening of the intervening trees, he with horror perceived that the miscreant was conducting him, by a something of a round-about course, to the very ruins, from which he had but a short time before escaped.

Drawing his sabre, he furiously seized the caitiff by the throat, and with thun-

dering voice and uplifted weapon, made him acquainted with the nature of his suspicions, and commanded him, as he hoped to escape with life, to confess the truth.

It has justly been observed, that

" A treacherous friend will prove a timorous foe;"

and strongly was it verified in the present instance.

The villain, trembling on his knees, and bellowing for mercy, acknowledged that, under the mask of friendship, he intended to decoy the Lieutenant to his ruin, by delivering him into the hand of those whose instrument he was, whose trade is rapine, and who existed in a state of perpetual warfare against the civilized part of the world, whose misfortunes might bring them within their line of operations, whether they had or had not property to lose—poverty invariably being punished with death, to deter others from the temerity of wandering abroad with empty pockets.

The

The rage of Osrick had almost induced him to sacrifice the self-convicted miscreant on the spot. "Wretch!" he at length, with vehemence, exclaimed to his entreaties, "my forbearance can only be purchased by thy scrupulous observance of my will. Conduct me to the path I seek, and which, with facility and safety, shall lead me to Monte Video, or thou diest! And mark my words, if I perceive the slightest symptom about thee, that, but for an instant, shall induce me to suppose that thou art labouring again to deceive me, that instant my sword shall find a passage through thy sombre body, to send thy infernal spirit howling to the gulf below!"

Trembling like the agitated leaves of the aspin, when Boreas but menaces to predominate, the mongrel promised to obey, and adventured to beg that liberty might be granted to him, when he had fulfilled his task.

"If from this time I have reason to approve

approve thy conduct," said Osrick, "I may grant the boon thou asketh—therefore proceed, and deceive me at thy peril."

The villain, turning shortly off to his left, now led the way in silence, Osrick, with unsheathed sabre, following him, and so continuing to do, for better than two hours, when Monte Video became clearly distinguishable at a distance, and the road that led to it obvious.

His guide now halted, and, in tremulous accents, reminded Osrick of his promise to release him, who bade him depart, and be careful how he ever placed himself in his way again.

The wretch waited not for the permission he had obtained to be repeated, but turning himself suddenly about, ran off with all the celerity he could command.

Osrick now considered himself in safety, and thoroughly harrassed and fatigued with what he had undergone, he took a recumbent

recumbent posture on the plain, to ease his aching limbs ere he recommenced his walk.

He had had no conception that when taking a survey of the country, he had wandered so far from the town on the preceding day, and the multiplicity of events which that circumstance had given rise to, he now thought of with an amazement that was not unaccompanied with horror, but which, in the end, was superseded by a mental glow of pious christian gratitude to the supreme Disposer of all things, for the miraculous escapes which, under his divine providence, he had been permitted to make.

The wound inflicted by the bite of the jaguar cub on his leg, and which he had almost hitherto disregarded, he now found stiff and painful, the teeth of the animal having perforated the boot in three places, and from which as many streams of blood had trickled, as the lower part of the boot afforded ample testimony.

The

The fatigue, however, which he had subsequently endured, he imagined was the principal cause of the anguish which he there felt, and no serious apprehensions arose for the consequences.

The blood that had incrusted on his face, from the slight wounds on his temple and cheek, was also stiff and uneasy; and, in fact, his whole frame had the feel of being severely bruised and sore.

Notwithstanding the aches he suffered, and the distance he yet had to walk before he could reach Monte Video, he flattered himself, that after taking some necessary refreshments to recruit his strength, he should be in fit condition to tread the same ground over again, and which he determined to do, with a suitable support of British soldiers, to give the blessings of hope and liberty to the lovely but ill-fated Clara.

The discovery which he had made of the beauteous maid in the ruins, and the grateful

grateful recollection that he should have it in his power to rescue her from her demoniac persecutors, was an ample recompence for all he had endured, and kept his spirits buoyant.

Having continued his recumbent attitude about ten minutes, the sound of cannon proceeding from the direction of Monte Video, aroused him from the reverie into which he had fallen, and he arose to finish his journey.

On rising, his limbs he found had become more stiff and painful, from the temporary rest he had given them; and, for some time, it was not without considerable torture that he could alternately, at a very slow pace, step forward the one to succeed the other.

Gradually, however, his pains diminished, as he grew warmer with the exercise, as onward he moved, not dreaming that farther perils awaited him, until

A THREATENING SIGNAL,

a shrill whistle from a thick plantation of fruit-trees which he had passed, first gave him the intimation that he was not quite so securely situated as he had imagined.

Shivering with predictive dread, Osrick turned to observe, if possible, what was passing in the quarter from whence the ominous sound had proceeded, and he imagined that he obtained a slight glimpse of his late guide, together with a transitory and indistinct glance of some other persons there concealed; but not an individual did the whole space exclusively display about him, so that he could summon no one to his assistance, if any new attack should be made upon him.

His situation was again become critical and alarming, and he began to be agonized with such sensations as sailors may be supposed to feel, at the prospect of shipwreck when within sight of port.

The

The plantation in question was about three hundred yards in his rear, and towards which, as his eyes again were anxiously directed, he beheld a sudden flash of fire, and which the report that succeeded it, the instant after, told him, had been emitted from a musket or fowling-piece, so correctly levelled at himself, that the bullet it sent forth perforated his hat, and very narrowly missed his head.

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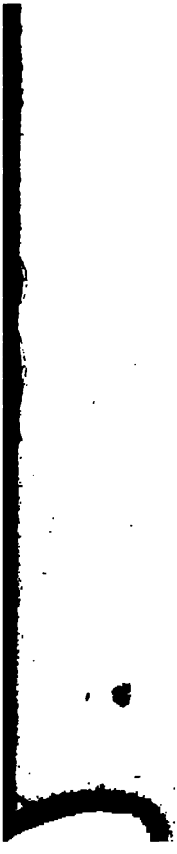
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